

The Silent Pastor

WORDS, PRECEPTS AND EXPERIENCES

OF

SPIRITUAL LIFE.

ASIATIC SOCIETY
CALCUTTA.

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P R E F A C E .

(To the first Edition.)

THE substance of the following pages appeared in my little journal, the "Interpreter," for a number of years. I wish, and some of my friends wish, that it should be put in a permanent shape as a book. These pastoral utterances express some of my deepest spiritual life. I have carefully revised them, almost written them anew, though I regret to say I have not been able to make them free from mistakes. I publish them for men and women in various stages of religious life and experience. I hope and pray that some of them may find help and comfort in what I have said.

P. C. M.

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The Silent Pastor

On the Devotional Spirit.

MY son, be heedful of thy devotions. Thou canst afford to dispense with every other necessity ; but how canst thou dispense with seeking thy GOD ? Strive, therefore, to behold Him and commune with Him daily, yea, many times in the day for short whiles. Hast thou any sorrows ? Confide them to Him. Hast thou any cares ? Let Him know them, whether they be great or small. Never, never be indifferent or neglectful to open thy secrets in child-like simplicity. Albeit He knoweth all before thou hast said anything, yet on thy own part never let any backwardness keep thee from perfect confidence in thy GOD. My son, know that, like a human friend, GOD seeketh the love and trust of His son ; in the smallest trifles He seeketh thy confidence. The man that confideth in Him receiveth consolations

tion past knowing. Consecrate thy thoughts to Him as thou dost rise from thy bed, ask a blessing, let a prayer arise for thy own good and the good of all beings. The morning is the time for prayer and meditation.

Let thy devotional mood stay with thee some moments. After thou hast risen from thy bed, silently meditate, sitting or walking. Devout and rapt meditation is the great feeder of prayers. Habituate thyself in that. Morning is the best time for communion with GOD; and the open air under the pure infinite sky, the mountain top, the river side or the forest, is the best place for it. Nay, if these be not at hand, go out into any open space, any road or garden or house top, and there, in earnest contemplation, devote thy soul to the holy meditation of divine truth and purpose. My son, let the praise of GOD be thy highest delight, let adoration be the real poetry of thy life. Let thy wonder at His blessed presence and attributes never cease. If thou art delighted with thy own devotions, the whole world will find them delightful. Thou art thine own priest, thine own minister; nay,

rather the Spirit that abides in thy heart is thy Minister and Priest : none can speak of thy GOD to thee so sweetly and truly as thine own heart. If, therefore, thy heart be dry and void, out of what wilt thou worship GOD ? All seasons and all places are favourable to him who is at peace with his GOD ; and if thou hast not made thy peace with Him, who or what else can give thee peace ? O that men should eat, drink and laugh, while their souls are far away from their Father's home ! O that men should behold every other beauty but the beauty of that Eternal Countenance. It is not far, nor is it difficult to be seen. Open thine eye, and His great wonderful smile is on all sides of thee. Spread the arms of thy longing soul and embrace that Formless Spirit. It is a great blindness not to see One who is so near ; it is great deadness not to love One who is so dear. If thou dost pray at all, why prayest thou not heartily ? If thou in thy devotions approachest Him daily, why dost thou not rest on His bosom ? My son, let thy devotions be to thee a draught of holy intoxication ; seek it, crave for it, indulge in it, whenever thy spirits are low. If it so

be that thou findest no satisfaction in thine own prayers, have recourse to the devotions of the best among the men thou knowest. Refresh thy tired nature in the pure streams of GOD'S worship, that flow in the sentiments and examples of the great masters of mankind. The Psalms of David, the beatitudes of Christ, the utterances of Paul, the raptures of Hafiz, the precepts of the *Gita*, the hymns of Nanak and other Vaishnava devotees, are all open to thee. The scriptures ever aid our devotions. Why dost thou not take their help in thy approach to the throne of Heaven? Why dost thou not read the devout prayers of thine own Minister Keshub? GOD has laid down so many effective means to draw thee to Him that thou hast no reasonable excuse for not seeking access to His presence, whenever thy spirit needs guidance and rest. Cultivate thy relations to thy Heavenly Father, if thou seekest for peace in this life. Realise spiritual things; learn to live a life full of strength in the bosom of GOD. Let thy unuttered communion be longer and deeper than any devotional language thou dost utter; but what language thou

utterest, let it be real, profound, sweet, beyond measure heart-felt. Mix with devotional men, avoid the undevout. Go where thou hast leave to express thy aspirations and where they shall meet with sympathy. Frequent places of public worship, and fail not. Contribute what thou canst to make them profitable to thyself and others. Listen to the utterances of devout men with trust and reverence. Always place and keep thyself in such mood that the voice of the Spirit may fill thee with holy impulses, holy thoughts, and teach thee the secrets of true devotional life.

My son, do not think that the profoundest problems of life have yet been solved for thee, and light has come to thee in the measure needed. What question mayst thou ask which the Spirit within thee shall not fully answer? What difficulty hast thou met which He hath not removed or promised to remove? My son, pray, therefore, without ceasing; learn to trust in the blessed Spirit within thy heart cheerfully, meekly, wholly. The faith of one moment oftentimes lifts the burden of a whole life. Pray that thou mayst have comfort

from above ; do not take it too much to heart that men have not appreciated thee, that they doubt thy motives, or refuse thee their confidence. GOD'S family is large ; it consists of many sons and daughters. If some hate thee without cause, their hatred is more than repaid by the equally undeserved love of others. Besides, is it nothing to be faithful and true before GOD ? If thine faithfulness hath not flagged in His sight, fear nothing about the opinions of men, which are hardened only to try the strength of thy trust. Everything is unreal and passes away. Nothing is more unstable and unreal than men's ill-feeling. Do not give it the imaginary permanence it never had ; let not thy false sensitiveness over-rate its importance. Love and goodwill, when inspired from above, only abide. Let love and goodwill grow in thy soul for thy friends and all others alike. Give freely, even if thou canst not get anything. It were far better to give thy deepest love to the unworthy than to get theirs ; because in owing thine utmost love and obedience to thy Father, thou owest thy kindness to every man and woman. Do not wait to bargain for the world's good feeling

and goodwill. Give, and do not hope to get a return. If anything come unsought, take it with gratitude. My son, always desire men's love and brotherly help; much cannot be done on earth without that. But never stand an expectant at the door of human sympathy. Learn to wait only at the door of Divine Love; when that comes, every thing comes with it. If that does not come, the wealth of all the worlds cannot fill thy soul. The difficult problems of life He alone can solve.

Thou hast falsely extolled the wealth of this world, O my child, over the supreme wealth of the spirit. Thou dost complain thou hast little of the resources of life. Is not the world of devout worship always open to thy attainment? Art thou a stranger to the blessedness of loving GOD? Canst thou not with due effort acquire daily strength of character? The realities of this life and of the next are laid open to thee as thy treasure, and still thou complainest of thy poverty! The wealth of all human excellence is now within thy reach, and yet thou art unhappy at the sense of thy want. Learn to value the power and riches of this world at their

right worth, and store up the eternal gifts of GOD in thy soul.

Give me, O Father, the sense of Thy wonderful gifts; grant me the possession and control of the great powers Thou hast entrusted to me. The riches of deep devotion and true thought are mine; these make the treasure with which Thou hast blessed man's nature. But behold, O Thou All-seeing Witness, I know not the use of all this great wealth wherewith we all are gifted. I live in forgetfulness of Thy marvellous grace. The false glitter of the world hath so misled me that I am anxious and fearful, because I am poor and friendless before men. Grant Thou me the inner sense of strength in the possession of Thy Spirit. Be the nearness of Thy presence sufficient for me in all my needs.

On Spiritual Culture.

MY son, peace will not come to thy soul unless thou hast been blessed with a sense of the simple reality of divine things. Is the presence of GOD a fact of perception whereto all thy senses and all thy powers testify? Or is it only an opinion, a belief, an impression, a remote rare experience, when the mind is depressed by circumstance? Yield thy whole nature to the sense of the Divine Presence when it visits you; and believe me there is no man—sinner, mourner, infidel or fool—whom the Spirit of GOD, the veritable unspeakable Presence, doth not at times visit and touch. This is the great teaching of the present Dispensation. Where then is the difference between the sinner and saint, between the unbeliever and the son of GOD? The devotee has given himself over to the overpowering reality of the nearness of GOD, the other has not. He has cultivated and exercised and perfected his faith and insight. All the practices and disciplines of

religion lie in this. The *instinct* is common, in some more strong, in others less; but the *culture* is wholly singular. It is time, my son, that after so many years of unsettled religious life, thou shouldst turn thy attention to holy discipline and culture. And the first thing to do in this direction is to live in the positive sense of the reality of an atmosphere of God-presence. This is possible by an intense communion with the Spirit in Nature. Seek the preceptor who, strong in his own devout experience of the reality in things, can lead thee by sure, though gradual, steps into the hidden sanctuary which the depths of creation contain. There is something wonderful to be said and known of the commonest things thou seest. A mine of precious metal lies underneath the bare ugly rocks thou hast trod a hundred times. Pearl-beds lie in the dark muddy waters where thou hast fished times without number. An angel is disguised in the humble looking man whom thou hast long known and who, many times, sought thy help in vain. Every object has its message, every event has its mission. There is no purposeless thing in the world—

nothing common, nothing insignificant, in what GOD hath made ; because the Maker has made each thing a symbol of some deep thought in His mind. Yet deeper perfection is in Himself. There is an earnestness in every phase and every law of nature, both in what thou seest in the outside, and in what thou seest not in the inside, of things. Nothing is made in jest, nothing without a very profound cause. And the depth of all things is the depth of GOD ; my son learn to find this. Seen without faith and wisdom, everything is commonplace. Seen with love and insight, everything is romantic. Seen in the light of GOD, everything is sublime and wonderful.

Begin thy culture by learning to behold GOD as an outside fact. Thou canst not make Him or unmake Him. Thy devoutest belief does not make Him more true than He is ; thy cruellest scepticism does not take away one jot of His stupendous reality. Thy belief and unbelief only react upon thyself. Faith in an active Personality beyond and outside of thyself, pervading all things, embodied in all things, appealing to thee through every object and

event, is the first stage of spiritual culture. There is no chance, "every chance is the touch of GOD;" there is no luck, every good thing is the Father's own gracious gift. Every event is arranged, every effect has a cause, every minute has a meaning to unfold. Go, retire into the woods, seek solitude, or get up in the middle of the night, to practise and perfect this quality of trust in an all-pervading GOD. Interrogate every object devoutly, study every beauty, colour, form, sound, sublimity, till it has disclosed its spiritual secret to thee. Believe, firmly believe, that there is many a secret to know, that they have been revealed to many devotees in every age and shall be revealed to thee, if thou seekest. Do not listen to the fools who would teach thee, that all is matter and all is law. There is infinitely more in the world than that. My son, make thy communion with nature an active earnest pursuit. There is a hidden Soul in everything; and that Soul shall speak to thy soul. Thou hast a counterpart in nature; and nature, in thee. The discovery of this kinship makes the whole world thy home, and GOD thy portion for ever. And if the Supreme Presence

is so imminent in the material framework of nature, how much more glorious is it in the spirit of man! "It is enough to look at the spiritual man to love him. Even the worst, the vilest men disguise the divine, and sometimes unconsciously reveal GOD. Let the divine in thee call out the divine in other men. The teacher who hath learnt the sure method of doing this, hath, indeed, learnt his vocation. The devotee who hath suffered the divine in him to find in his life the vent which the Spirit always seeks, hath found and preached the true GOD. Yielding to the impulses of the Spirit is one of the highest prerogatives of the sons of GOD. Hasten to the scenes where the infinite drama of GOD'S self-disclosure is being acted in the life, beauty, purpose and glory of the earth and its human habitations, in the souls and inner histories of men. Abandon thyself to the Spirit of GOD in all things, and thou shalt see what makes earth like heaven and life like immortality.

On God in Man.

I HAVE already advised thee, my son, that the form and spirit of man contain the deepest revelation of the Deity. But I have said it is a disguised revelation. He that has truly seen GOD, has seen also GOD in man. He that has truly known man, has seen humanity in GOD. To see the Divine in the human is also to see the human in the Divine, because at bottom and in essence the Father and the son are one. O the inexpressible glory of recognising man as Divine and GOD as human! The faith, insight, reverence, simplicity, pure mindedness necessary for such recognition make the substance of religion. But each so-called religion sees the excellence of some of its own men, idolises the few, persecutes the rest and thus mutilates the image of GOD. Because the perfections of GOD need to be disclosed in ten thousand forms; and these forms are human characters in various lands and ages and stages and circumstances. To be

able to love GOD as thou lovest a definite human personality, is the aim of all practical religion. The shadowy forms of the Infinite in the laws, forces, beauties, beneficences of nature, do call forth a sort of love and faith. All this makes up the poetry of religion, which by all means cultivate; because the deepest poetry and the deepest philosophy and the deepest spirituality are different forms of one and the same reality. Yet let me assure thee, my son, faith, disciplines and spiritual exercises among religious men are somewhat different. There has been not a little genuine religious sentiment and sound doctrine among such as thyself; but it threatens to come to nought in the absence of well-directed work and obedience. These can come only out of true relations with thy fellow men. A body of believers, a brotherhood of saints, a church of the faithful, a kingdom of GOD, becomes thus unavoidably necessary. Wherever trustful, pure-minded, God-loving spirits meet, such a community naturally forms itself and grows. When faith, devotions and personal sanctities decline, spiritual fellowship also decays and disinte-

grates. This is just the state of things in most churches now. No amount of rule or ritual or committee can keep up a church organisation without genuine spirituality. It is a galvanised corpse. Every one who associates with a dead body is smitten with death. Death rules among the churches at large; the forms, the outward surroundings, of religions benumb the spiritual life of the world. Yet it is strange to see that forms and externals make the greater part of the world's faith! It has pleased the Holy Spirit of GOD to give fresh religious dispensations again and again to the world, in order that these dead forms may be made alive, that the dry bones of theologies may be clothed in healthy flesh and blood, in the flowing folds of heavenly vitality. There is just now such a new Dispensation very active in our midst. The secret of that resurrection of the religious spirit is the profound sympathy of brotherly love. This brotherly love, at first an impulse like the love of GOD, does not come by effort. It is as instinctive as the perception of beauty in nature. Each man, every way-farer in life, has at one time or another, felt the

joyous impulse of pure brotherly love. It comes generally in the spiritual youth of the soul; but it comes again and again; and the meaning of religious discipline lies in being able to make it perpetual in the heart. It is given without effort; but it has to be maintained with the greatest effort.

Beauty excites love. Bodily beauty, we know, does this; but we are yet to know that spiritual beauty does it very much more. Thou shouldst love man when thou seest something of GOD in him. Recall to thy mind thine early associations in the house of GOD, the beloved friends of religious youth. How warm the affection, how unreserved the confidence, how entire the trust, what joy in mutual communion and in the sweet act of common worship at the altar of the Common Father! Was there not a bright loving recognition, a sense of kinship and friendship in a sacred cause? How many points of virtue and godliness didst thou not see in each other? Ask thy deepest consciousness if that recognition is entirely wiped out, if those points of heavenliness in the life of others are darkened for ever? Time

and experience have, perhaps, brought to light a good many things that are unlovely ; but should they pluck out the gentle plant of love by the roots ? Nay, my son, that cannot be. There is a recognition of man by man, which is the recognition of the divine by the divine. It is instinctive and natural. The Father who dwells in each man's heart calls out a mutual brotherly relation in the chosen children of GOD. The spirit loves and honors the spirit in every one ; and unless men forsake GOD, they cannot forsake each other. The God in one will surely recognise what is true and good in another ; the divine will coalesce with the divine ; and hearts will always tend to unite. (I speak now specially of apostolic men, in whom the Living GOD constantly acts for the reconstruction of His kingdom). But our carnal weaknesses often hide men's goodness from our view. It is, indeed, too true that the sense of the All-holy Spirit in the souls of His children will be repulsed by what is unholy in one another. Passion, pride, selfishness, hatred, falsehood, in whomsoever found, shall meet ready condemnation from the faithful of the com-

munity, who have neither fear nor interest in any manner of ungodliness. But I declare unto thee that, amidst this present eclipse of right relations among men, the old moral recognitions, the early affections of the children of GOD, seem like a mystic circle of light. My son, do not pretend to believe that men are entirely evil, that there is nothing to love in their character. Thou knowest that thou dost still behold some features of the face of the Father in their faces, and their spirits now and then reveal to thee the purposes of the Supreme Disposer of life. Cherish this sense of humanity in the most sacred moments of thy daily thought and experience. When the Holy Spirit reveals the higher self of thy brother in thy heart and suggests thy true relation with him, I entreat thee, hold that blessed image before thy mind as long and as often as thou canst until the relation becomes a reality. The more thou doest so, the brighter the image of thy brother will show, till thou dost wonder thou couldst ever have hesitated to love or forgive him. Make it a daily act of spiritual exercise to contemplate the virtues of each individual member of the

brotherhood wherein the Father hath cast thy lot. Yield thy whole heart 'before the divine image in the spirit of thy brother; pray to GOD to remake thee and him according to the patterns of excellence in godly men. Thou knowest unlikeness to holy men is a grievous short-coming in thee; pray to GOD to reveal Himself to thee in His chosen children. At times shut thine eyes to all things, and make it thy whole study to behold GOD in the holy man. Learn to behold Him in all men, in the meanest and vilest, but chiefly in thy revered friends and beloved ones. Remember that all true excellence is from GOD. Begin with what is easy to admire, and end with what is least easy. Begin by recognising and loving the virtues of thy friends; end by praising, respecting and loving the virtues of thine enemies. Always be ready to be reconciled to them. Man *as man* ought to be a dear object to thee. And the viler he is, the greater the yearning with which thy soul should be drawn out to restore him. The holier he is, the readier the honor and love with which thy soul should be related to him. Let humanity be to thee an inner world, complete in

itself. Owe no man anything but to love and serve him. Remember the greatest enemy to brotherly love is thy own selfish inclination. The moment thou dost exact anything from thy neighbour, any gain, any advantage, any service, any appreciation, any good thing of this world or the next, that very moment the canker enters into the sweet lotus of brotherly love. Thy affection for the children and servants of thy Father should, therefore, be most unselfish. Be not anxious to show, rather be anxious to conceal, thy kind wishes. But whenever the blessed time comes that thou canst do some real service, then thou hast thine opportunity, then let thy love kindle like a fire and burn all obstacles before it.

- Thus GOD in man, man in GOD, complete the circle of human relations. Feel it, realise it, as the saints of old ever did. Talk of personal disagreements and disagreeable controversies? These thou canst not avoid sometimes; they will seek thee, if thou dost not seek them. Have always the courage to uphold and love the truth when thou hast found it. Feel in all cases bound to avoid

hatred, ill-will, hardness of heart. Create, or rather help in the making of, the kingdom of GOD around thee.

On the Right State of the Soul—I.

MY son, art thou at all near to the state of soul which thou feelest bound to attain ere^{*} thou goest^{*} hence? Not the mood of mind which cometh upon thee at a rare interval of prayer and contemplation, but the habitual level of thy thoughts and imaginations makes up thy condition before GOD, thy Judge. Not to compare thee with the perfect GOD, where wouldst thou deserve to be if weighed in the scale with the least of His angels? Not what thou sayest, nay not even what thou doest, but what thou *art* in thyself will decide thy fate. How wouldst thou fare if compared with wise, good, and holy men of whom every religious body is full? In the wide slough of the merest seeming the souls of men lie contented; art thou also to end thy life there? My son, rise to the true life of wisdom and goodness, be sainted by the daily blessing of GOD. To be great or famous, to have a high place in the world's estimation, is not given to every one.

Eminence or wealth, after all, is not the highest happiness ; it is often grievously burdensome ; but to whom is it not given to be pure-minded, loving, forgiving, true, wise, and faithful? Know then that is thy calling in life. Be that, and thy coming to the world shall be to the joy of many of GOD'S children. What acquaintance hast thou with the deep things of the spirit of GOD? How far hast thou lived in conformity with His purposes? What are thy relations to thy fellowmen? What is the secret object of thy life ; what are the hidden unuttered attitudes of thy mind towards men and women, those who are friendly to thee, or who are indifferent or unfriendly? Dost thou love them truly in spite of all they have done to thee? Alas, the clearness of thy spiritual vision is often obscured by the dust and impurity of daily struggles, thy calmness broken in by thy hot passions, thy holy resolutions upset by the world's delusive charms. Thou 'often sufferest thyself' to be cast down from the heights to which thy spirit rises at moments, by the low motives of carnal and worldly life. To move amongst men, to do life's

duties actively and incessantly, and yet to keep intact the unspotted saintliness of the soul, is the problem of the spiritual man. But thou, my son, in going to be saintly, hast neglected thy appointed work and, in going to do thy duties, hast lost thy saintliness. The true state of GOD'S^s elect is an everlasting state; it never suffers apostacy, neither in thought nor in act, neither internally nor externally. Seek that rise from which there is no fall. Seek the sweetness that does not turn to bitter again. Seek permanence and perpetuity in faith, love and obedience. Hast thou found the mind of GOD in thyself and in all others? Do not lose sight of that again. Has He sanctified thee? Keep thy sanctity as the dearest treasure of thy soul. Lose everything else for it—health, happiness, worldly interest. It is time, O my son, to be settled in righteousness and the love of GOD. It is time to have a name in GOD'S household to be known by, a character to hold firmly to, a place in GOD'S eternal mansions. To-day an angel, to-morrow a worm; to-day an apostle, to-morrow, an apostate: how long yet wilt thou

wander from change to change? Unchangeableness in all that is good is immortality; and a man can rise to be an immortal even in this life. The body changes and must change; the mind also changes in its opinion, views and principles. All things 'pass away, and thyself with them. Take heed thy spirit changeth not amidst these vanities. Take heed that thy spirit changeth neither in lovingness nor in trustfulness, neither in progressiveness nor in purity, in relation neither to man nor to GOD. But as the water ebbs and the light fades, let all things daily find thee growing in peace and perfect union with GOD. Let men earn wealth or fame or power; let men rise, fall, win or lose; but go thou through thy allotted part in life's great drama, only anxious that thy innermost soul and outermost conduct sing one sublime harmony, that thou shinest with undimmed light which comes from union with the Eternal.

On the Right State of the Soul—II.

MY son, is this the state of soul worthy of thy high calling, and thy relations with the Spirit of GOD? Is this the enthusiasm of love thou didst vow, the devoted service of self-consecration thou owest, the sustained practice of pure-mindedness before the throne of the awful GOD? Awake, O thou that slumberest, and reflect upon thy true condition! Either GOD liveth not, or thou, in spite of thy sense of false security, art fearfully near the brink of the precipice. It is poor comfort to think thou art better than thy neighbours, poor comfort that thou daily prayst, even if thou canst say so much of thyself. The claims of GOD and man upon thee are high, the duty of self-consecration is stern, and the service due from thee shall not wait. Slowly, slowly but surely, all things are moving on, to-morrow will not be like to-day, changes come on ceaselessly—changes that hasten the crisis, crisis that hastens the consummation. Everything looks as if it is always to be the same, as if that which is

shall be. But things are never the same ; thou perceivest it not, because thou art changing with all the rest. Evil continually brings on the return of evil, good of good ; good is sometimes changed to evil, evil less often to good ; take thou heed of thine own heart. For know there is such a thing as the inexorable law of work and its consequences, and from that law there is no escape. Restless Providence is now and here working secret changes both in thee and in all things ; only, O my son, in thy fatal slumber thou seest not what is taking place about thee. If thy opportunity has come, seize it with the eagerness of thy nature, and make the best of it without waiting for any one. Remember thy vows, remember thy sins, remember the high calling of thy place. Foolish it were of thee, whoever thou art, to think that the Almighty GOD should take counsel of thee in making and ruling His kingdom, and that things should happen according to thine wish or calculation. Thou knowest well that this is not to be. And, therefore, thou despairest ? Nay, the more reason there is that in this changeful world thou shouldst

trust and pray, that thou shouldst take heed to watch over thyself and over all things and shouldst be always alert to do, to the utmost, what is required of thee. For thou mayst fall, or thou mayst rise; and what is not expected may happen to thee any day. Therefore, thou who canst still call thy life thine own, make the utmost use of it to find thy GOD and be worthy of Him. My son, faith in GOD is not to be measured by the advantages thou gettest out of it. Faith always seems arbitrary and unreasonable. Is love measured by reason, and are its possibilities within the calculation of loss and gain? We trust and we love, because we feel we must do so. We know what we are to-day; but no one can say what we may be changed into on the morrow. GOD is great; His love to us, and our love to Him, if realised, would be a stupendous power. It is right to trust in Him for all things. Let His pleasure be done unto thee, it will surely bring thee good. Only one thing lies in thy hands. Do thy work of the day. From thy past experience be thou heedful to exercise the severest control over thy passions. This will humi-

liate thee often more than thou knowest ; because thy passions mean nothing less than thyself. And if thou art purged of thy self-will and anger, of thy pride and sensitiveness, and of thy self-interest and thy power of doing harm, there is, indeed, very little else of thyself that is counted of any worth in the world. They will count thee naught and never fear to heap offence upon offence on thy head. Thy passions hitherto have defended thee ; and if those passions are disarmed, art thou not defenceless ? But now commune thou with the Spirit of GOD. Let His presence and wonderful power pour into thee. Let His grace and love comfort thee, so that thy devotions and thy pure motives may be thy stronghold and thy services unto men thy only relationship to them. Let thy love to GOD, feeble and foolish as thou art, call in His unfailing word of wisdom ; let His will be as a heavenly light in thy path. Rise every day to take the vow of self-consecration afresh ; rise to daily enthusiasm, to acceptable worship and work. Then thou art armed for all contingencies. GOD is a living Spirit ; His salvation shall forsake thee not. "

On Life Immortal.

THOU askest how thou canst be immortal? It is only by dying that the fear of death can be overcome. The love of life is ingrained, and so is the fear of death. But thou art aware that, try as thou mayst, life cannot be kept, nor death avoided. Why then should any one be inordinately fond of what he may not keep, or be unmanfully afraid of what he must some day meet? Let us soberly judge the matter, and make the necessary preparation therefor.

The love of the world enslaves us to the flesh and fills us with a vague dread of its dissolution. Every one is more or less afraid of dying except he who is dead already to the world. But how can we be dead to the world? By renouncing it; by ceasing to have a passionate fondness for it; by ceasing to serve it with any motive of self-interest. But we see many men who have apparently left the ways of the world,—who are ascetics,

careless about their food and raiment, who do not earn money and have no family, yet whose heart is not in GOD. They are full of self-love, they glory in the vanity of self-conquest, in the vanity of religiousness; they know little of immortality and spiritual life. Living for self, for carnal desire, the luxuries of the world, the fashions of men, is courting sure death. Dying to worldly indulgences, to fame, pride, revenge, hatred, falsehood and all that pertains thereto, is the way to overcome the fear of death. There are two kinds of dying to the world: one is dying as a suicide, and the other is dying as a sacrifice. He that dies by his own hand may deserve the credit of being cruel to himself, that is all; he is often a stranger to the joy of everlasting life. To hate the world is not to love heaven; to hate pleasure is not to be in paradise; to be a stoic is not necessarily to be a friend of GOD. On the contrary, it has been often seen that those who hate their fellow-creatures and the natural happiness which GOD has given them, hate GOD also; those who arbitrarily renounce the lawful enjoyments of life, hate also the joys of

other men ; those who are hard and cruel to themselves are very often hard and cruel to others. Hatred and hardness of heart are the weapons of self-destruction ; these do more harm to a man himself than to his fellows. The first sign of life immortal is to love to see all creatures happy. Self-inflicted austerity, unless under proper guidance, is the path of spiritual suicide. Beware of it. Self-discipline is, indeed, indispensable ; and no discipline is pleasant in the beginning. But practise it as a means to an end, never as an end in itself. While indifferent to thy own enjoyments, let no day pass on which, in some form or other, thou dost not add to the enjoyment of another. If to deny thyself the pleasures of life means to make others happy, deny thyself by all means ; if to indulge thyself means making others unhappy either by depriving them or by setting before them a vicious example, deny thyself again and again. If, on the other hand, by living a cheerful and grateful life, by the temperate enjoyment of the gracious gifts of GOD, thou canst teach men the supreme duty of being happy, of gratitude and love to the Giver of all

good, thy joyousness in this world and purity of character will make a fit preparation for the blessed life beyond it. Neither is enjoyment anything, nor is endurance anything; but to live in GOD purely and wisely amidst the joys and sorrows of life, without passion and vanity—that is the secret of life immortal. Learn to leave life and all dear things in it with serenity, when the call comes from GOD. But remember those who recklessly renounce their own lawful joys in life, hate also the joys of other men; those who are hard and cruel to themselves, are very often harder and more cruel to their neighbours.

The man who learns to die to the world, giving his life as a sacrifice to GOD, is surely an immortal. To lose the sense of living in the spirit and in the love of GOD, is to be mortal; the sense of perpetually living in that spirit is life immortal. Who lives thus? He whom the dealings of GOD have convinced, whom the voice of the Almighty has rebuked out of worldly passions. 'Under the stress of Providence I have bade adieu to gain, to all the means of life; to place and'

honor have I bade adieu, to health, to friends, to all that is dear in the world. It is a wonder 'how I live to-day cheerfully ; surely GOD keeps me !' So says the man of renunciation. 'Ceaseless struggle with the flesh is my lot. I sometimes conquer, I am often conquered. But surely I will overcome' everything in the end. Though I am slain, yet I will trust in GOD.' So says the man of struggle. This slaying is not imaginary, it is real. It is not everybody who is slain by Providence. But rest assured, whom GOD loves He slays. First to one thing, then to another, the man of GOD is compelled to die, though fain would he not. And as death enters by one door, immortality enters by another. In proportion as GOD takes away He gives. He takes away the world and the flesh ; He takes away a man's power and position, even a man's imagined virtues ; but He gives spirit and life everlasting. The perishable He takes that He may give the imperishable. He loves the sacrifice ; He revives what He kills. The price of immortality is death—death to the flesh, and love to GOD.

My son, if the prosperity of this life were all in all, thou couldst have it with some striving. The birds and beasts have it, sometimes very bad men have it. Though GOD meant we should live in the world with dignity and cheerfulness, yet it is most true that we should live in sanctity and truth, even though we should have to renounce things of the flesh, so that the things of the spirit might be granted us. It is impossible, O my son, to enjoy the spirit and the world in the same measure. Although it is certain that in some cases they who seek to live in the spirit alone, do find peace and healing here also; yet in some cases, again, for instance in thy own case, it is different. Affliction is the law of the spirit for thee. Every one of thy powers and feelings is tainted with worldliness, to the very core of thy heart it is unsound, even thy faith and devotions require to be purified in the fire. Because thou hast truly cried for salvation in the midst of thy iniquities and infirmities, the Lord hath heard thee from His holy habitation. In His might He hath descended into thy life, and changed thee completely. Every sense of thy heart, mind, soul, and body has had to be

transformed, and revived in the power of GOD. It is necessary thou shouldst have food and clothing, but not as other men; thy worldliness will have to be scourged and purged. It is necessary thou shouldst have friends and companions, but not as other men; thy relations with thy fellow-beings will have to be purified and chastised. Indeed, thy whole life will have to be made anew. Who can do it but thy GOD? And how, can this new life be made except that the old be unmade? The process, therefore, is not pleasant; the breaking down means death,—death in life. The building up, however, which goes on side by side with the breaking down, is a new creation, a new joy, an immortal life. Already thou art dying and being born anew. Have patience for a little while yet, have faith in what GOD is doing for thee and in thee, and remember the tribulation of the present is as nothing compared to the glory which is reserved for those who have put their trust in GOD.

My son, the immortal life is a thing of great hope. All hope for it, but none so fervently and surely as those who live a spiritual life. What this devout

hope is on the part of man, is the gracious and repeated promise of GOD, whose spirit lives in the heart of man. That hope grows, and that promise to each one of us is confirmed, at every step we take heavenwards. The life immortal is again a thing of great experience. Even while a man is here, if he is practised in communion with the Spirit of GOD, he is sometimes exalted to a state of living which is without doubt above his life of the flesh, or of the world, or even the exercise of his reason and his sentiment. Immortal life is inspired life; and the inspiration of immortality is truly an experience, though rare. This experience is the gift and grace of GOD. Treasure such experiences; and do not weaken them by a contrary life. The faith in immortal life is natural and universal; but this faith grows without limit as a man's faith in and vision of GOD grow mature and perfect, until faith in GOD and faith in life everlasting becomes one faith, and all doubt is at an end. And finally life immortal is a thing that brings along with it overwhelming evidence through the death and resurrection of the sons and daughters of GOD. Thou art able to

behold the spirits of the dead, not surely as ghostly apparitions which are the foolish inventions of men's disordered fancy. Thou beholdest, as a spirit beholds a spirit ; the immortals are seeable in GOD amidst the ecstasy of intense devotions or rapt thought, when the earth needeth the stimulus of heaven and the distinctions of natural and spiritual worlds vanish. As thou beholdest the formless GOD in His works and influences, so beholdest thou also the formless spirits within their ever-living works, examples and influences, till thou becomest immortal thyself in oneness of being with GOD and the spirits who abide in GOD.

On the Soul's Destiny.

MY son, has the word of destiny been uttered in
thine heart by the Spirit's voice? Dost thou definitely know what thou hast come here to do? Has the key of golden deeds been placed in thine hand by the Heavenly Visitant in the rapt moments of thy communion with GOD? Know that there is conversion after conversion, re-birth after re-birth, secret within secret, in the realm of the Spirit. GOD ceaselessly reveals Himself in new forms, and ceaselessly speaks to His waiting, praying, chosen devotee. How many times hast thou been re-born, and how many secret communications about thy destiny hast thou received in thy heart? Each day's pious exercises ought to make a new man of thee, ought to bring new light to thine eye and open a fresh prospect in thy future. When the real great message of his special work has been delivered to heaven's pilgrim, and when he has received it kneeling in trust and reverence, almost every day a new mes-

sage, a new secret, is unfolded about his appointed work here on earth. The Spirit of GOD, when He has come down as the Indwelling Teacher and Light, will inspire fresh impulses, open new depths and make new revelations of His purpose. Whenever there is a new problem of duty, a new perplexity of misfortune, a new opportunity of circumstance, the Spirit will stir the heart to some original course. Nay, sometimes quite unforeseen, like a falling star from the clear sky, the thrill of impulse descends on the man of destiny ; and woe unto him if he neglects or delays to obey ! Every man's history is made for him, yes, it is pre-ordained, every man's destiny is enclosed in his nature ; but he must labour to find and work it out. He who attempts to make his own destiny, or to create his own history, oftentimes makes a melancholy blunder. Every man's life-history, if he has any, is the history of deeds done, or words spoken, or risks run, under the stress of some heavenly visitation consciously or unconsciously received. When He the Teacher, the Revealer, comes (and come He shall to His elect), let Him abide, let Him have His way with thee ; grieve Him

not away by indifference or evil-doing or hard-hearted doubt or moody despair. Nay, renounce joys, make sacrifices, consent to humiliations, that the Spirit may have His way with thee. In fastings or festivals, in times of exaltation or depression or poverty or ill-health or persecution or ill-luck, the Spirit often comes. Never despair then. Let me assure thee, thou hast not seen yet what thou couldst see, not heard up to now what thou shouldst hear, nor done what thou art destined to achieve. Trust me in this, I am not dealing in unrealities. What is the ever-memorable day in thy life ; has such a day yet dawned to thee ? How many such days are in thy calendar ? Count them, lay them out before thyself. Or are there memorable days of evil which cannot be wiped out of thy troubled memory ? Remember them that thou mayest avoid a similar fate. Give account of thyself to thy GOD, if thy time has come, and what use thou hast made of it ; if thy time has not come, wait for it every day in fear and hope. For as in the history of religion, so in the history of the person, there is a pentecostal morning ; and from that date his true career com-

mences. A man of destiny is not necessarily a man of religious career ; some great message of science may be his gospel, or some great ideal in the political or social life of a people, some higher standard in art, some deeper secret of philosophy. Everything that enriches the earth is the work of some man of spirit upon whom the Great Spirit worketh either openly or unknowingly. Askest thou why, then, are so many people drudging on the low plane of worldly life without any chance of rising to anything high ? The love of money and bodily pleasure has enslaved thousands ; they never look for, or take pains to think of, anything great beyond, and they live the life of animals. Some, again, mistake their calling or take wrong means to fulfil it. All those men fail and sink into the slough of vulgarity. There is a turning point in each man's history. Thy career, my son, has been an interrupted career ; thou hast not followed it steadily. Therefore, seek re-conversion ; seek thou the return of holy impulses, that the word may be once more spoken to thee which thou hast lost, or rememberest but faintly and in fits. Pray to GOD

to re-describe, re-animate, renovate thy destiny, that thou mayest have the strength given thee to work it out. Incessant work, either with the body or with the mind, with pen or with speech, is the duty of the man of destiny. For, believe me, every destined work is so great that a life-time is too short for it, and there is not an hour to idle away. Yet live not in fear of death, for GOD shall not call thee away till thou hast fulfilled what thou camest for. The history of each soul makes the history of the household, the history of the household makes the history of the community, the history of the community makes the history of the nation, and the history of GOD'S chosen people makes the history of the world. This is a fact. Thou hast to contribute, whoever thou art, to the annals of the world's emancipation. That is why thou wast sent here. How thou mayest do it must be found by thyself, being taught thee by the Indweller. Here all other teachers shall be silent, only the Spirit of GOD shall tell thee. Therefore, be advised and wait most patiently at the door of Heaven's immortal mansions. Cry night and day

that the Spirit's awful purpose may be sounded in thine ear, that the secret of thy destiny may be laid open before thee, and that it be put in thy power, too, to inscribe in the spirit-history of the world that another man came with a great message and did deliver it worthily as a son of GOD. Yet, know, that the star of destiny, which is under the leading of the Light of lights, is sometimes obscured, the path of history is perplexing, darkness and loneliness overtake us, and then we know not which way to turn. Then is the time for the exercise of faith and will, for holding by GOD'S word, for drawing upon the examples of the past, to walk, not by knowledge, but by the guidance of the Unseen. This is what every son of GOD has shown how to do. My child, do not forget GOD when GOD seems to have forgotten thee. He never forgets, but sometimes hides Himself to bring to thy remembrance how apt thou art to forget Him ; so that thou mayest strive by pure life, by prayer and faith, to remember Him always. Blessed is he who feels he is always remembered of the Father ; many times more blessed he who, feeling as if the Father had forsaken him, for-

sakes not the lessons of love and trust, but is faithful unto the last. His obscured destiny shines out as the full moon's lustre after the shadow of the eclipse has passed over; his history illustrates how the recurring perplexities of life are overcome by faith and endeavour, how the strength of GOD waits behind the weaknesses of our poor humanity, and how the love of GOD for man is more real than every misfortune, every defeat, every trial of sin and circumstance. The history of no life, as the history of no nation, is an unbroken record of triumph, prosperity and joy; but the conscious love and nearness of the Spirit of GOD turns defeat and disaster into that accomplished destiny which transforms all the reverses of life. Be not overcome, therefore, by the fear of man, by the fear of death, or by the fear of sin or poverty or persecution; but trusting in the destiny which shines clear before thee, go on in GOD'S light, in the wholeness of thy strength, until thou, too, hast accomplished the part of the great purpose unto which the glories of earth and heaven move in one unending procession.

On Admiring Excellence.

MY son, learn to admire the excellence of GOD, be thoroughly penetrated with the sense that every thing is good and for good. Goodness has found its dwelling place in the things around thee and in the men around thee. Not to admire and love it, is to lose a high happiness, a great privilege and much profit. For things do not become other than what they are by thy loving them or not loving them; but thou thyself becomest good and evil by turns, good when thou admirest the good, evil when hatred is present in thy heart. My son, in this mixed perplexed world great good and great evil lie side by side in the same man; no one is entirely pure. If, for that reason, thou wouldst accept the creed of universal distrust and doubt, woe unto thee; thou hast missed the great secret of the world, done great harm to thyself. But if with a wise insight into the imperfect state of human character, thou wouldst heartily ad-

mire every excellence that presents itself in the men whom thou seest, it would not only draw out the excellence in thyself, but also open a whole panorama wherein various brightnesses, goodnesses, virtues, geniuses and talents give witness of GOD'S continued presence in all His creatures. Alas, that men should measure the excellence of things by the rule of self-interest, or self-satisfaction. Why should they always think whether so and so are for or against them, whether such and such things have helped or hindered their wishes, pleased or displeased them, as if good and evil were to be defined by the benefit or pleasure of any one in particular! All enmity would cease in the world if this thought of personal gain or loss ceased altogether. Admiration for the excellence of GOD'S creatures would make thine own heart the home of everything good, if thou wouldst forget who was thy friend and who was thy enemy and love everyone for his own sake. My son, learn to speak and think thus of those who dislike thee:—"Would to GOD these men were better and kinder and purer, but such as they are I will still love and respect."

them, because I see the image, however broken, of the Spirit of Goodness in the virtues they each have. That they are not considerate of my feelings does not disqualify them from being the sons and servants of GOD; that they do not appreciate or accept me is no disgrace to the excellent things which GOD has thought fit to confer on them. Would that it was in my power to be one of them in the adoration and service of the Great Master; but even as it now is, who can keep me from appreciating them, admiring them and loving them? These men had the power and opportunity of becoming the light of the world, the consolation of everyone's sorrow, everyone's friend, helper, guide; they have chosen to cripple their usefulness, mar their progress, and oftentimes to become a stumbling block to the purposes of the Almighty. Hence their ill-success, their wretchedness. But, all the same, there is in them a large measure of the grace of GOD; there is virtue, there is character, there is self-sacrifice, there is piety. They are more virtuous, more pious, more industrious, in some respects, than I am. I will, therefore, cherish a sincere admiration of their

excellence ; I will learn from them ; I will imitate them where I can ; I will love them always, help them whenever it is 'in my power to do so. I will try to forgive every wrong, forget every insult, take heed of no obstruction, but cherish the sense of every kindness I have ever received." My son, the sense of admiration, kept warm and active, is the surest, easiest way of acquiring excellence for thyself. When mutual appreciation is deadened by party-spirit or self-importance or the absence of love, it is a cause of much misery ; and at the same time it is most difficult to make any progress in the path of goodness. If the good examples that the Spirit of GOD plants on thy path are so much darkness and evil and meanness, if providential guidance is taken by thee as misleading, say what will lead thee but thine own imagination ? And selfleading to the selfish is the sure precursor of ruin. Therefore, watch thou on the road for whatever light it pleases the Great Guide to place on thy path ; find thankfulness and admiration for every good example ; be hospitable to all the sons, servants and saints of GOD. For know it is in the

power of the least of these to add to thy joy and to help to thy salvation. All light is not equally glorious ; there is sun-light and there is moon-light, star-light and lamp-light. But to the weary way-lost pilgrim all light is welcome, even that which glimmers from the closed gate of the adversary. GOD is light ; and wherever there is light, there is GOD. Only let us pray that, because of the evil in us, the light of GOD be not darkened and darkness may not seem as light. My son, admire the excellence of thy GOD in all things, chiefly in men of light and wisdom. Even when thou canst not imitate, have the heart to admire the good and great. For always remember that the admiration for the good man is next to the adoration of GOD.

On Self-sacrifice.

MY son, long and loud indeed has been thy talk about self-sacrifice, but thy performance is exceedingly little. Nay, in this unceasing speech and profession of thine there is often found the opposite of self-sacrifice—there is a good deal of self-assertion. Self-sacrifice means the renunciation for other men's good of what is held dear in bodily comfort, or the opinions and preferences of the mind, or even apparent religious advantages and views, or the proprieties of conduct. It will surely cause thee pain—bodily, mental, moral pain; true self-sacrifice is often attended with pain. The man who has sacrificed himself is generally silent about his sufferings, he believes in the power of example rather than in the power of protest. He believes in men's spiritual discernment and sympathy rather than in his own evidence of himself. The first sign of self-sacrifice is in silent suffering and uncomplaining humiliation. Remember the example of

the man who was speechless in the midst of his unjust trial, who amidst the foulest accusations and insults did not open his lips but allowed his enemies to have their way. The great test of self-love is the hatred of suffering and the eager search of personal prominence. So well has this been perceived by religious men that a great many have, in the name of self-sacrifice, regularly courted pain as the object of their life. Asceticism which, in spite of modern protests, can never be stamped out of the religious world, has thus been, and shall always be, the standing reproof to the love of pleasure which is the bane of all spiritual life. I do not ask thee to idolise self-inflicted suffering, though occasionally, as a discipline, even this be undoubtedly wholesome. I advise thee never to flee from pain that will surely come to thee as the natural result of thy circumstances. Such suffering, be assured, is the dispensation of the Purifier of thy soul. Suffering comes to us in many forms; now as illness, now as poverty or insult or injustice or calumny or opposition or contradiction or lastly as death itself. The man of self-sacrifice submits to all these as his most

sacred duty, as the practical worship of GOD. Do what thou mayst, the instinct of self-love is not to be rooted out. Nor is this instinct an evil. Thou mayst spurn at its grosser forms; but inasmuch as the highest self in man is the son, and of the substance, of GOD, to love the Spirit of GOD in thyself is to love and respect what is heavenly and spiritual in thy nature.

My son, it is the experience of my life that suffering is always bitter. I cannot say I have ever loved suffering; it is always painful. But what is bitter is not bad therefore; nay, on the contrary, what is sweet is sometimes poisonous, what is bitter is often wholesome. Such is the power of the miracle of the grace of GOD that submission to His will makes the bitter sweet, bitter to the mouth, sweet to the constitution; and the devout can never permit poverty, or disease, or death to be undervalued in their effect on the formation of character. My son, the sacrifice of pleasure, the sacrifice of self-will or even of so-called religious principle, in the name and for the glory of GOD, at once brings an assurance that GOD has accepted thy gifts, and

thy mind is full of tranquillity. Divine patience is another effect of self-forgetfulness. Neither wisdom, nor success, nor insight into GOD'S purposes, is possible without a continued attitude of patience amidst the sorrows of life. GOD has given to each one of us what powers we have; some have much power, some have little; but when the crisis of life comes, He proves how worthless we are in saving ourselves or maintaining our dignity except by His wonderful grace. And this grace is the reward of self-sacrifice. Another excellent fruit of it is genuine faith. Belief and opinion consolidate into the power and light of faith, when a man has the devotedness to forego his cherished plans before the call of unpleasant duty, when he sacrifices them at the altar of GOD'S will. Self-sacrifice is the sure price of a spiritual life which walks by faith on earth, and is an unfailing prospect of immortality. Self-sacrifice is indeed a tribulation; but tribulation produces experience, experience wisdom, wisdom patience, patience faith, faith hope, and "hope maketh us not ashamed."

On Vain Competitions.

MY son, cease to struggle in this wild fever of emulation ; help men, act with them in every good cause, love them, serve them with energy, but cease to fight with them the vain battle for taking the uppermost place. Persons and sects, households and states are all struck with the desire of surpassing each other, everybody's aim is to overthrow the rest, to outshine his fellows, and the result is strife, ill-will, ill-feeling—a wretched victory which defeats itself in the end. What matters it if thou hast by persistent effort gained thy point, when by gaining it thou hast lost the rest and purity of thy heart, the refuge of truth, the strength of justice, the sympathy of good men and the grace of GOD? The man who is defeated in a righteous cause is in a much better state than he who has triumphed in a bad one. To suffer defeat with Providence on your side is to be on the winning side, for truth triumphs at last ; but to

exult with the wicked and boast of triumphant untruth, is to court sure downfall in the long run. And the reckless competition of the times darkens men's judgment as to what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false, so that the good man and the bad alike sink into the untold sorrows of self-delusion. My son, long as it may seem to thee, life is but a short lease in the great domains of time, its rights are soon run out, its privileges are always conditional, its forces are ceaselessly on the wane. Art thou to spend them in repressing thy neighbour, or in acquiring the peace of GOD? Art thou to lose thy rights and thy strength and thy substance in establishing a foolish victory which to-day is and to-morrow is forgotten; or art thou to discover the secret purposes and profound tranquillities of union with the Spirit of GOD and the spirit of humanity, that thou mayest abide in them for ever? Many kingdoms of many conquerors rose and fell; many systems of many founders have been forgotten; the victors and the vanquished alike sleep the sleep from which

there is no awaking ; the quarrels of persons and parties are hushed in the grave. Man cometh to the world not to fight that he may reign^u for ever, but to offer himself as a soldier to found the eternal reign of righteousness that GOD alone may be glorified, yea none but He ! Therefore, forget thy strife, thy cherished aims, thy chosen place, even sometimes thy so-called principles and objects of public utility ; cease to compete for victory with the sweating struggling masses around thee ; put a stop to thy weary efforts ; let thy opponents press forward ; consent to be left behind, left alone ; and for the rest of thy days practise the forgotten art of finding rest and union with the Spirit of GOD. Thou, my son, dost indeed know the dignity and blessedness of this rest both in thy own life and in those of a few others who are thy examples ; but thou hast used thy experience in a most unsteady manner, and thy soul is torn asunder by a double ambition. Know thou canst not be great in earth and in heaven at the same time. Give up the world's vain struggles, and make thy peace with thy GOD.

Perhaps thou wilt think that under some such impulse as this the old devotees of India forsook the world entirely to become wanderers. Probably it was so. But seldom, indeed, does it serve any good purpose to desert the warm activities appointed by Providence, and immure oneself in the cold solitudes of the selfish anchorite. One can shut the door to the world's oppressions; but canst thou shut out the crueller oppressions of thyself upon thyself? Nay, I teach not the desertion of good work; I teach the forsaking of self-advancement, of strife and competition. I teach the great duty of co-operation with all in the truest spirit of love and goodwill. In the anxious struggles for the service of GOD it is impossible to avoid conflict with the worldly-minded, the self-interested and the cynical; and the very Providence of GOD is subject to calumny and distrust in the crooked judgments of the world. If it is possible, live at peace with all men; but whether thou art at peace or not, thy appointed work must be done. Only always remember, my son, the waste of energy in vain struggle is as bad as selfish idleness. Activity

does not mean work always, it may be sometimes worse than idleness. The right use of the forces entrusted by GOD to man gives him wisdom and power for good. If a man fully possesses what is best in himself, he possesses the world. But very few know what it is to possess and use their natural gifts. What that right use is, thou shalt be enabled to find out for thyself under the gracious counsel of the wise Indweller within. Work, work ceaselessly, labour, reap, plough again in rain or wind or sunshine; but drive not thy plough over the peaceful rights of thy neighbour. Never act in ill-will, never knowingly harbour the least ill-feeling against any one, never wish to defeat even thy bitterest enemy in his lawful ends. Do thy own work in the name and for the glory of GOD; and if thy neighbour turn his hand against thee, do thy work with all the greater earnestness of mind, and let the issue rest with GOD. Thou shalt not desire to do overmuch work, nor shalt thou desire to abstain from good work; but in unflagging zeal and faithfulness, out of love for every man, thou shalt labour to finish thy appointed course, and be true

to thy calling, so that thou, too, little as thou art, mayst be accepted as the son and servant of GOD. The common impulse of ambition is not to be approved, much less the unbrotherly impulse of emulation. Self-advancement, self-esteem, self-defence, all come within some form or other of self-worship. It ought never to be the motive of life's action. It subserves pride and draws away the heart from GOD to some extent, however little perceived. The love of GOD and man is always the safe impulse of action. The man who loves can never remain inactive, though seldom, almost never, is the nature of his action popularly understood. That which it has always been his aim to avoid, is ruthlessly laid to his charge ; and he may never retaliate or even defend himself. Let the love of GOD open thy heart to all good work, whoever may happen to do it. Let the love of GOD warm thy heart to do thy best to draw all men to Him. Let all thy faculties expand and go out of thyself in the service of Divine purpose and human sorrow. Ay, even in this unselfish work, much opposition and spite will have to be met ; men will

suspect thy motives and impute all manner of evil to thee. But my beloved son, always remember thy love and service of the Heavenly Father means the surrender even of thy good name to do His will; it means the progress and preparation for death in life; it means the training of the spirit for that mansion of blessedness where the weary are at rest and love is rewarded with love.

On Following the Appointed Course.*

MY son, in the name and for the service of GOD, prepare for the difficult undertaking to which the Spirit has called and circumstances have invited thee. The chief and important preparation is to feel reconciled in thy whole being to the purpose of GOD, a purpose which is revealed daily in thy heart at the blessed time of devotions and in the pressure of duty. The Divine purpose is a steady unwavering light that ceaselessly gains in lustre as the time draws nigh to execute it. Be sure, the purpose of the Almighty, when genuinely obeyed, taxes every power of body and mind, and forces it to yield the best and highest it is capable of, both in spiritual and in moral quality. Another chief preparation to do the august will of GOD is the strong pure conscience void of all offence to GOD and man. The fatal disqualification against any great under-

* Written before leaving for the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893.

taking which has for its object the glory of GOD, is the consciousness of selfish ends and the sense of evil persisted in. Indeed, it is not in the nature of things that a frail sinful man as thyself should be immaculate and thus be able to avoid every form of unworthiness in thought and act ; but thou must, in ceaseless sorrow, pray that the All-merciful may wash thee clean from clinging wickedness. GOD is love, and will surely forgive thee, help thee and daily feed thee with His heavenly grace that strengthens the soul for its true work ; but hatred and selfishness persisted in will sap the basis of every noble enterprise and delude a man to rest his hopes of success on the merest chance. For this world and for the next, for peace and for strenuous endeavour, the best preparation is kindliness and goodwill to all beings and a mind purged from every form of wilful impurity. The Holy Spirit of GOD is not pleased to accept the service of him whose hands serve a double end and whose heart is darkened by ill-will. Therefore, devoutly remember thy friends and enemies, all who help thee or who spread bad report against

thee, who aid thee in keeping the vow of thy great service or who look upon it as a mockery or a clever piece of self-seeking,—remember all those with whom thou hast had anything to do and unto every one of them extend the outstretched hand of forgiveness and friendship. Pity where pity is due, or love or a generous forgetfulness of what is past. Even if the situation which they have made for thee is cruel, my son, sweeten the bitterness of the cup as thou drinkest it by asking upon it the light of Divine grace that changes whatever it touches. Never curse, never revenge, never try self-justification, never meet evil with evil. To thy mild, gentle nature love is more natural than hatred and kindness more easy than cruelty. Bless GOD that this is so, and venture to act in the pure impulse of thy heart which is awakened by the Spirit. My son, strength for every great vow comes from the resolution to do what thou art bid to do in all thy relations—to thy neighbour, to thy family, to thy church, to thyself. The more earnestly thou dost thy duty every day to everyone, the better able thou art to do it in cases of great emergency. The

more thou dost avoid one good work, the less able thou art to undertake or accomplish another.

My son, kindle enthusiasm in thy soul for the service of GOD and the love of humanity. If thou art oppressed within one small circle of men, go, enter and breathe in a larger circle. But know both the large work and the small work are one work, marked out by the hand of the All-knowing. Accomplish the one for the sake of thy discipline, the other for the sake of thy destiny. Whatever thou dost gain or lose, never lose enthusiasm ; for life is a reality, the glory of GOD is in the enthusiastic soul, the fire of which cleanses, consecrates and kindles into joy. The test of all true faith is that it kindles the soul, gives great power and great hope. The vow of self-consecration is not a flush of sentiment, a high thought that shoots up like a firework and comes down as rubbish. It is the gradual elevation of an entire nature, it is the slowly-attained meridian of the soul's orb, it is the achievement of destiny. Like me, my son, prepare to accomplish thy destiny worthily, under the guidance of GOD. Behold, all things pass away.

Where are the good, the worthy, the bad, the unworthy, who within thy memory crowded the stage of life? They and their sorrows, their loves, their hatreds, their triumphs, defeats, interests, influences have all subsided as ripples in the stream. Only one thing remains—the accomplishment of thy appointed work. Those who are able to finish that, rise into the spirit-realms to shine down upon us with undying example and to light us in our dimly seen path. Firmly, fearlessly walk in thy prescribed course, though thou shouldst see numbers falling on thy right and left and the solitude of death haunt thee amidst life's scenes. Age, ill-health, dire want, the vanities of rank, the cruelties of wealth, the tyrannies of power—all will try to tear thee from thy purpose. The unrighteous shall scoff, the righteous turn away their faces in disapprobation; the heavens shall threaten to fall and crush thee, the earth shall sink under thy feet. But, my child, the unerring hand of Providence points onward, the Voice from above calls and calls. There is no rest at home, there is no rest in the heart, society gives no rest, the sanctuary is

full of trouble and disorder. GOD calls thee to His work ; what dost thou look behind for, whom dost thou wait for? Love all, respect all, pity the poor and mistaken, forgive everyone; but follow the Spirit of GOD, the Indweller's leading in thine own soul. There is work enough for thee in the world every day, there is place enough for thee in the largeness of GOD'S house, an unseen brotherhood stands with open arms to receive thee, an unseen congregation waits with eager ears to listen to thy gospel, the immortals are with thee, why hesitate? Lo, the century like a long weary water-course is drawing to its close, from the shores of time the mists are slowly lifting, the sunlight of the Dispensation of the Spirit smiles, on the upland and valley, the nations are sending forward their wise men,—My son, let us bless GOD, rise and move hence !

From America.

MY son, there is no separation for them who love each other in GOD; no, neither in this life, nor in that to come. There are temporary absences, and these purify our relations all the more. I adjure thee to seek and enter that land where distance draws souls closer together; where, scorning the limits of the earth and the flesh, the spirit is always in contact with those dear to it, as each one is in contact with GOD. When I was coming away to this distant land, sadness was deep in my heart. How could I leave all dear ones behind, who knows for how long, who knows whether or not for ever? But these winds and waters have chastened my soul, and instead of going farther I have only gone nearer, still nearer to you all. The nearer and the more like unto GOD, the nearer and dearer to each other—that is the law. All other love is vain: friendship is a vanity; domestic tie is an entanglement; religious fellowship, a vexation; all courtesy, politeness, duty, but hollow formalism. Loving each other by divine attraction, unaccountable spontaneous

love—only that is true. My son, all other hypocrisy is excusable, hypocrisy in love is the gravest sin. Therefore, let dissimulation cease ; love each other truly, everlastingly. To thee let it be a genuine consolation, thou hast loved every one in sincerity, even thy worst enemy. On the day of the great reckoning may the All-seeing Witness bear evidence that thou hadst many faults, but that thou didst love truly, and then the angel of love shall bring unto thee all the forgiveness of thy sins. It is easy to love. The dog loves its master, the horse loves its groom, the bird loves its feeder, the child loves its companion. Only thou, my foolish child, hast made hard what was easy, only thou lovest not. Or, if thy love be but little, thou makest so much demonstration ! GOD is loving, yet He makes no show of it. When the time comes to help, He helps, and then retires far away. Why canst thou not do the same ? In thy modest retiring nature let the most intense affection prevail. Show it not, keep it, let its flame never die out. Some day thy love shall bring its reward. Let the lamp in thy heart burn steadily : if it dispels no other darkness,

it will surely illumine thine own eyes. But like the foolish virgin thou hast neglected to trim thy lamp and fill it with oil, because the night is long : thou art sleepy and idle ; when the bridegroom comes, beware thou mayst not be left out in the darkness. Love in secret, forgive in secret, pray for others, good in perfect secret ; if need be, outwardly look stern and harsh. For know, love is not softness, love is strong and sharp, sometimes fierce. No wonder therefore men do not feel GOD is love. To most He is cold, far, hard, heartless. Those who love Him, they only know His love. Why complain so loudly, they have not known thee, they misunderstand thee ? The holier, truer thou, the less will they recognise thee. This has been always, this shall be. If a few appreciate and value thy love, that is enough. Let those who love thee become every day holier for loving thee. And if thou lovest any, let thy love make them perpetually GOD-like. For know, my son, we soon become like what we love. Those who love GOD become GOD-like, those who love Satan soon take the likeness of Satan.

Gratitude for Success * and Call to Co-operation.

MY son, the Silent Pastor has not been silent during the last twelve months. The solitude and retirement of these ten years have borne fruit in clearly spoken words which the Spirit blessed abundantly and incessantly. For this year of golden harvests, of fulfilled promises, of realized hopes, of accomplished ideals, of safety and protection, of health and success, my son, let us kneel down and offer fervent thanksgiving to the Father of all good. And while we do so, can we forget the many beloved ones who have been taken from us? Perhaps, in no previous year has the shadow of death been so often across our threshold, claiming those whom we could so ill-afford to part with, casting families, provinces, nay the whole household of GOD, into darkness and sadness which nothing can relieve. Their glowing faces, their familiar

* Written on return from England and America.

figures remain engraved in memory, their sentiments and characters treasured as the riches of our soul's store-house. They have passed away, we are here. Their absence doubles our responsibility, for their work is superadded to our work. May that work never become less, but increase unto the glory of GOD! Nevertheless let us, who are spared, not be forgetful for a moment of the blessings lavished on us. In sorrow for the dead let us not forget our duty to the living.

Last year has proved one thing conclusively. The simple message of the Brahmo Samaj is universally acceptable to all mankind. Our religion has a two-fold aspect, a local and a universal aspect. In the former not only shall different lands and nations differ, but provinces and parties shall differ also. In the latter our principles form the ground work of all religions and of all spiritual life. One is transitory and therefore continually changeful and progressive; the other is essential and therefore fixed and permanent. Being the creatures of time and circumstance, all men must

change and grow from more to more ; being the children of the Universal Eternal Father, all men must accept the everlasting purposes and truths of his New Dispensation. They have accepted or are going to accept it. Let us, therefore, be thankful and joyful and let us also take pains to discriminate between what is passing and what is permanent.

But thou, my son, art so perplexed about the distinctions between the real and the passing that thou hast set thy face against both. The quarrels of men, the untowardness of events, the apparent defeat of truth, the apparent triumph of falsehood, the disturbances to peace and progress, have upset your faith. Things have not turned out as you wish or expect, and therefore thou hast turned thy back to the vineyard of the Lord and set thy face to find other pastures. Tell me, thou who art so unwise, when was the pursuit of spiritual life sweet like a bed of roses, when did the service of the Most High conform to the hopes and desires of His servants? Tell me where would be the need of trusting Him or praying to Him or submitting or bearing thy burdens, if the dealings of GOD.

were all cast in the moulds of your own poor pitiful preference? Follow GOD, ye faithful, aye follow the foot-prints of GOD'S faithful over rough ground and smooth, over marsh, meadow and desert places, in sorrow and darkness, in 'depression' or encouragement; be staunch now and till the end; then you shall see that those who put their trust in the Lord are never disappointed. • Those who seek to serve GOD under circumstances of their own choosing, seek the paradise of fools; soon, very soon, will their imagined cup of bliss turn into the bitterness of gall, and among the so-called children and servants of GOD there will be rage and hatred and mutual persecution. On the other hand, those who, though fasting in the wilderness, wander in search of the land of promise, though their feet may be weary and their eyes dim, shall before long find assurances that they are on the right path, and the grace of the Lord shall be to them like a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Turn, therefore, to the purposes of the Eternal; they take long to find fulfilment as

all everlasting things must take, but in their due time they shall come true, for the omnipotence of GOD is behind them. Tarry no more, nor waste thy time, thy life is far gone, the everlasting dawn and the everlasting doom are at hand, take up thy light and gird thy loins to do the work of the Lord. The hand of destiny points to it, the hand of thy past experience points to it, the living and the dead speak of it. In other lands, among great foreign peoples has the Lord borne testimony to His own true purposes. These present times and the nations of the earth have laid down the lines of the great work that has to be done. My son, heed my call, hasten to my side, let us for a while serve the Lord together.

The Advantage of Religious Emotions.

MY son, lacking in the sterner qualities of religious character, in the gift of devout feeling lies all thy force; therein thy nature has found a due compensation. This is no small advantage. Say what use thou hast made of this advantage? In all lands, in all faiths, many are the means taken, many the attempts made, to excite intense religious feeling, often without much or abiding effect. For when the heart is awakened, every great and good quality is likely to be awakened thereby. In thy case, if the awakening has taken place by the very law of nature with little conscious trouble on thy own part, how hast thou used this natural blessing, how far has it advanced thee in the path of spiritual life? Canst thou fail to remember that in days gone by, even at times now, the impulses of devout emotion would blaze up in thy heart like sacrificial flames, and make it easy for thee to be drawn into sanctified relations with thy fellowmen,

and to be raised into a condition of spiritual ecstasy ? Those celebrations and pious festivals in which this took place cannot be wiped out of memory. Let me assure thee, such aptitudes are still in thy nature, thou art capable of reverence, of love, of devotional excitement, of great tenderness. As soon as these passing shadows of ill-feeling move away, thy better nature is seen to come up to the surface again. Aye, it has often been thus, but thou hast neglected to use it as in days of old.

My son, learn to bear thy crosses. Thy crosses are firstly those things for which thou art answerable. Thou hast got to do a certain work, certain souls are entrusted to thy care, and the natural gifts which the great Master has committed to thy keeping thou art bound to use, that thou mayst serve Him in serving His children. A man whose heart is fresh with pious sentiments can renew himself again and again amidst the wearinesses of life, wearinesses, let me tell you, without which the course of character is never shaped. Remember, the office of these ardent feelings is to give repose, vitality, susceptibility. But as too

much repose, instead of refreshing a man for his daily work, unfits him by slackening his vital powers, so when sentiment makes the end, instead of the means, of religious life, it unmans the soul, and makes of the devotee a weakling, a poor visionary, perhaps sometimes an unconscious hypocrite. Utilise thy devotions then in the arduous work of thy life, and in giving thee rest and refreshment to carry the burdens which are appointed unto every man in his own way.

In the next place, learn to forbear. The griefs, the injustices, the enmities of the world make a necessary part of its economy. Indeed, most men harden their hearts against their lot, and return hatred and evil with kindred ill-feeling. It is not permitted to thee, O my son, to act in that way. Every religion teaches the supreme duty of forgiveness, tells thee to bear thy wrongs with meekness, to have the most genuine pity for thine enemies, and return evil with good. Why dost thou then allow thyself to be carried away by secret resentment; why dost thou brood over the ill treatment thou hast met at this vanity-fair of life? What

dost thou hope to gain by nursing within thy poor frail heart the remembrances of the bad behaviour of the children of darkness? Alas, they have done sufficient harm unto themselves by doing and thinking as they have done; and thou wilt do no good either to them or to thyself by adding bitterness to their bitterness, and heaping hell-fire on their hell-fire. If thou art indeed the child of light and sweetness, prove and justify thy coming to earth by bringing forth sweetness out of bitterness, and the calmness of peace in all discords. The gift of devotional tenderness is granted thee to help in doing this good work. Behold bitterness, and passion, and hatred, and cursing burn up the fair face of GOD'S kingdom; all creation is in pain; and the sweet serene Mother sheds the supreme grace of divine love in thy soul that thou, too, on thy part, will spread healing and comfort and sweetness upon the afflicted of GOD'S household, forgetting thine own wrongs. If that is too much for thee to do, then school thyself at least to keep silence and peace in thine own soul. Be contented with thy lot, always retain thy tranquil mood, let nothing

disturb the composure of thy face which thy prayers have sweetened. Learn to forbear, learn to bend thy head to the blasts of the world, because the Lord hath abundantly strengthened thee with the glory of His grace. Remember, my son, to learn to bear silently makes the half of a man's life, the other half being to learn to act faithfully. The force of thy character has not been great, the energy and balance of the Hindu's character is often scanty : by forbearance and silent suffering make up that lack. Let the world remember that, if thou couldst not do all thou didst wish, thou couldst suffer silently, thou couldst trust humbly, couldst love much, so that thus thy suffering and sweetness might make for righteousness at last.

Love is strong, aggressive, audacious, not sticking at trifles. Thou claimest to love GOD and man, and yet art overcome by the slightest triumph of evil. Ah, my unreasonable child, thou art intoxicated with thine imagination and sentiment, and dost miscall it love. For if thou art fond of those who are fond of thee, what dost thou more than the beasts of the field? They fight also those

who fight them, and lick the backs of those who lick their's. It was expected of thee that thou shouldst do more. Lay thyself out, therefore, to learn that love which can stand ill-treatment, bear injustice, accept evil returns, and still continue to be genuine unfeigned in loving. Knowest thou not what endless patience is needed to rear a child, to teach a class, to keep a household, and deal righteously with such dear ones as wife and family? What cruelties, indiscretions, ill-temperers, stupidities and provocations must be endured! Yet the father, the teacher, the husband is beneath contempt who cherishes grievances against his own flesh and blood. Thou, my son, hast set thyself to found and build the kingdom of heaven on earth, and dost thou faint at thy labour of love? I tell thee, lose not thy faith in the power of unselfish love; thou shalt lose more by ceasing to love than thine enemy by losing thy love; and conversely thou shalt gain more by loving than thine enemy by taking advantage of thy love. Any way, therefore, from thy own standpoint, or from that of the one thou lovest, love is the supreme blessing, then

supreme when thou hast learnt to love in the face of cruel hindrances. Only one little warning I must give. Learn to love without dissimulation. Do not affect kindly feelings. Do not express concern without feeling it. Do not deceive by fine phrases when there is unloveliness inside. Stern unsympathetic silence is better than the hollow affectation of love. Nay, strong true love can bear to be harsh and cruel sometimes. Occasional severity is a necessary quality of true affection. Be satisfied before the pure court of thine own conscience that thy attitude towards men is nothing but the loftiest goodwill and pity. I have known smiling, amiable double-dealers to be the most loveless of men. Love genuinely, and then any course of conduct thou deemest necessary for the conversion of thy neighbour is lawful. But tender or severe, the one essential quality of a religious life is spontaneous ungrudging affection for all men, ever seeking to bring them and keep them in the household of GOD.

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On Holy Contentment.

MY son, how easily hast thou forgotten thy manifold debt to the kind Providence of GOD. How soon thou art apt to complain of the slight inconveniences that come of thy not getting the vain things of thy desire. If thou couldst weigh the causes which ought to make thee happy with what makes thee so constantly unhappy, thou wouldst soon think that it is neither just nor reasonable nor dutiful nor grateful to put on this spirit of sad and constant complaint which disfigures thee in the sight of GOD. Thou hast the enjoyment of the beauty and sweetness of all this glorious world; its flowers, its verdures, its waters, its harmonies are daily spread out for thy delight. Instead of thy worshipping the great GOD of nature, it seems almost that nature with its uncounted offerings propitiates thee, and yet thou art not content. The radiant orbs of light revolve around thy seat night and day; the seasons bring their

plenty ; thou art housed and protected by the city ; humanity spins and weaves for thee ; the science and skill, the wealth and armament of all mankind preserve thy life, and yet thou art not content. Thou hast life, health, spirits, honor, resource, position, but thou hast little satisfaction. The wisest have taught thee knowledge, the best in the world have become thy friends and exemplars, the name of GOD has shed sweetness and glory on thy heart, and the holiest of religions promises thee peace in this world and immortality in the next ; yet thou art not content ! But I understand thy dissatisfaction. Everything which it was possible for the gift of Providence to make thee happy has been given. Know that happiness comes not from the gifts of GOD to man, but also from the gifts of man to GOD. Know this to be the secret of life that happiness is never perfected in receiving, but also in giving what is most precious. My son, countless precious things thou hast received both from GOD and man, count now what thou hast given either to the one or to the other. Little, very little, indeed, has been thy giving, or thy sense

of responsibility, or thy accepted trouble, or thy allotted suffering for the sake of the love of GOD. And the older thou art growing, the more ease-loving thou seemest. Even in thy worship, in thy austerity, in thy life-service there is a taint of self-love. In all these directions thou hast done what thou hast done because thou didst like to do it, rather than because GOD and man demanded it from thee. The value of a gift is in giving what is needed, and not so much in what pleases thee to give, or in giving what thou canst spare without discomfort. In thy offers of service up to this time how much of thy self-esteem has been renounced, how much of thy cherished possessions or thy fond habits or tastes or public convention or the respect of thy friends and acquaintances? Not much, I am afraid. And where there is no sacrifice there is no satisfaction. Because all true sacrifice comes from love. Whatever is sacrificed out of any other impulse, out of interest in this world or the next, out of a desire for show or vain imitation, or sourness of temper seldom brings peace or joy. Whatever is sacrificed for the sake of the beloved, whether the object of love be GOD

or man, nay, even for the sake of the unbeloved, for the sake of giving happiness, not of getting it, surely brings more happiness to thyself than what thou canst possibly give. Renounce, therefore, some of the innumerable benefits thou hast received at the altar of GOD'S love, and the Great Giver shall bless thee more than ever before, bless thee with the inner peace that is always satisfying. There is difficulty, indeed, in renouncing what pleases us and in giving away what we prize. But the more that difficulty is overcome the greater the grace of GOD consciously poured into the soul. The more you renounce, the more you enjoy what you renounce, and what you part with brings added blessedness along with the parting.

Another thing that is fruitful of satisfaction is the sense that thou art always in the keeping of GOD. All that has accrued to thee in the shape of bodily or spiritual benefit is His purposeful giving, all that thou hopest for, if thy hopes are righteous, will surely come in the right season if thou wouldst strive in faith and dependence. The gift that comes after the heart-felt prayer of need, whether

it be the refreshing of the soul, or receiving the bread of poverty, or help in the service of GOD, brings the profoundest content because it is the realised blessing of Heaven. Before, however, prayer brings its practical response, or dependence ripens into strength, or faith is blessed with fruition, the interval is long and trying, the tranquillity of the soul is difficult to keep, and there is nothing for it but to wait in fear and unrest with an upward gaze. Nothing satisfies but the innermost conviction that the Almighty Arm supports thee. And from day to day this support is needful as bread to the hungry. But the conscious support of the great Guardian is vouchsafed after much asking and much earnest faith; few have the patience to wait long enough. Most men, therefore, in the crying needs of life have to provide for themselves out of their own strength and toil, and it may do well enough for the while; but weakness and unrest must return in the end. Because the provocations and contraries of life are too much for the endurance of any one man. I do not say that the faithful are always at rest; but I do say they are on

the sure way to peace, though the way be long and their pilgrimage weary. •My son, it is better to find the fulfilment of one holy•aspiration after years of asking and waiting at the door of the Lord than to achieve a success every day which in the end perisheth in the fatalities of the world.• My son, it is better far to obtain one real gift from the gracious hands of the All-merciful than to be a constant mendicant at the doors of the wealthy and worldly-minded. Thou hast obtained• much ; now have it all consecrated unto joy by acts of faith and sacrifice.

On the Gift of Religion.

O MY son, let us give glory unto GOD, the Father of all mercies for blessing us with the gift of a religion like unto which there never has been anything since the world was made. I swear to thee it has brought life and peace, the hope and strength of faith to me as nothing ever could; it has given me the best of everything on earth; it has given me the perfect assurance of blessedness hereafter. For disease that is incurable, for poverty that is hopeless, for persecution that is cruel, for sorrows that are not to be remedied, and for the countless troubles, fears, humiliations and injustices of life, it has brought the unfailing balm, the curing comfort, the light that abides at the core of things. I have not the heart to complain of these stern visitations, because if it were not for them I should never know the profound meaning of life hidden in GOD. But if there has been one measure of godly suffering sent for the ripening of

the soul, have there not been a hundred measures of unalloyed joy sent to reward and cheer every man on his way? The very sunlight is a happiness, the very sky is a source of unfailing calm. Yea, the very fact of being alive is a boundless possibility of the purest good. Each change of condition is crowded with blessings felt or unfelt. This is realised in unclouded moments of meditation that throws a heavenly radiance far before and far behind, and fills the world with the gloriousness of GOD'S face.

But my son, I did not mean to speak of all this when I called upon thee to be grateful to GOD for the gift of His holy religion; I meant to speak of that religion itself. Behold how simple and natural its beginnings in thy soul. Faith in the spirit of GOD sprang out of the spontaneous instincts of man's heart, like love unto parents, like the desire for food and drink, like the perception of the world outside, like the natural knowledge of all things essential for the life of man. This simple faith grew in thee with the increase of years, by hearing, by seeing, by precept, by example, by the Word of

GOD that came to thee from various sources. Then thou wert initiated in prayer, in the definite acceptance of the simple principles of the Brahmo Samaj. From that day a new life dawned upon thee, it was indeed a second birth, an entrance and introduction into the kingdom of GOD. Dost thou hesitate a single moment to acknowledge the supreme efficacy of prayer and faith in GOD? Thou hast no knowledge how intimately it has formed thee, how deeply it has influenced thee, shaped thy path, opened thy heart, revealed thy GOD to thee, united thee with the best of men, and brought thee out of a thousand doubts, confusions, and inducements to evil. My son, like the silent dews of the night, whose fall and rise no man can see, our prayers and aspirations nurse our souls; the dew keeps the world soft and green, while the thunder-storms and rains come and go in momentary turmoil. ‘

Quietly and surely like the small seeds of mighty forest-trees thy ideas of GOD and His providences worked in thee. Ring within ring, in outer and inner growth, in branch and foliage, in blossom

and fruit, the tree of thy faith arose. Doctrines and scriptures, ceremonies and liturgies, all grew timely. Just think for one moment what this religious development has done for thee intellectually. What insight it has given thee into the wisdom of all ages; what emancipation from the fetters of superstitious ignorance, from the oppressions of bigotry, from the hardness of dogma, from the threats of false authority! Is there any freedom so precious as the freedom of truth? And truth has made thy mind free. Every field is now open to thee, every heaven is unbarred, every wisdom is welcome. When to this is added the gift of moral purity, the unfettering of the soul from passions, prejudices, hatreds, lusts, the darkness of remorse, and the confusions of conscience which sin must cause, truly thou mightest be grateful to GOD the giver of the soul's salvation! Holiness is the light that enthrones wisdom on the loftiness of GOD'S pedestal, and unseals the mysteries of our divine relationship to Him. Yea, the foretaste of that holiness has been given us. If it is not perfected in thee, my son, it is but the fault of thine own

neglect and disobedience. Thou canst not deny thou art invested with the royalty of moral life, and hast the key to the inheritance of the pure in heart. Nor is this all. The human fellowship which thy religion has brought thee is world-wide in its expanse. By calling GOD thy Father thou art claimed by all mankind as their kinsman, a member of the brotherhood that enlists the wisest and best of all nations in the past and present. To what part of the world hast thou gone where they have not embraced thee with open arms, forgetting all distinctions of creed and colour, nay in what part of the world hast thou been where honour, welcome, affection, help have not come to thee as the heavenly manna came to the wanderers of Israel in the wilderness? If this is not a real blessing, what is? The fullness of the Spirit has given thee access into every religion, into the source of every inspiration, into personal relationship with every prophet and sage, and bound thee in unity with the Son of GOD in whom all earthly excellence and all prophetic glory is consummated. O my son, in accepting the gospel of this New Dispensation thou hast become

the interpreter of GOD here on earth, the minister to all mankind, the chosen receptacle of the Spirit. Let us give glory unto Him and strive to be worthy of the honour to which we are called.

Reproof and Counsel.

AND, alas, O my son, is this the temple thou hast built, is this the vineyard thou hast raised with all the immortal seed and soil supplied to thee? In this thirsty land the angels of GOD dug for thee a brook of living water; thou didst drink to the full measure of thy thirst, thou didst bathe and cleanse thyself and thy household, and the heat and the fever of thy soul were allayed. Thou didst till thy field with the gracious streams of the Lord, and thy sowings took root, and we all promised thee great harvests. Now behold what thou shouldst have obtained and what thou hast reaped unto thyself. Peace was thy portion, but thou hast earned as thy reward a cruel unrest. Love was thy sure inheritance, but out of the poisonous things around thee thou hast brewed to thyself a hatred which has embittered thy bowels and sickened thy soul. The ill-feelings thou and others like thee have sown, have bred a malaria which

strikes down every one who approaches the atmosphere. Good men want to run away from the plague spot, and innocent men are tainted by it; only the wicked and designing want to revel in it, adding misery to misery and hatred to hatred. Thou who shouldst have set an example of the quiet endurance of wrong, dost thou return evil with evil? Thou who shouldst have been a pattern of forgiveness and gentleness, dost thou cherish in thy heart wrath, violence and vindictiveness against thy supposed enemy? In the place of meekness thou hast indulged in vain self-glorification; instead of renouncing thy rights thou claimest more than what was ever thy due; instead of consenting to be passed over in silence thou breakest the stillness and peace of the house of the Lord with thy noisy complaints; instead of honouring the virtues of thine enemy and wishing him well thou dost disregard the undoubted worth even of thy friends. The back-bitings, the insinuations, the evil reports, the maledictions which thou carriest wherever thou dost dare to wag thy tongue, are the scandal of the sacred cause wherewith thou dost still connect thyself. In the

name of GOD and with the language of prayer in thy mouth, thou sittest down; but before a few minutes have elapsed; the reckless cruel things in thy mind rush out of thee like a storm of evil making thy prayer an execration and thy profession of brotherhood a farce. Thou sayest, thine enemies are accountable for this state of things; and thine enemies lay the blame at thy door. Whoever is to blame, darest thou call this scene of darkness and anarchy the dispensation of GOD? Darest thou call falsehood truth, hatred love, enmity unanimity, quarrel co-operation, mutual extermination the salvation of souls? Straining with all thy might at the poor frivolous fancies of thine, thou dost thus break every day the life and spirit of religion. O my poor child, thy whole head is sick, thy whole spirit is at fault. Surely this is not the temple of the Most Holy, this is not the vineyard of the Lord; thou hast strayed very far from the true path, thou hast turned thy back to the holy will of GOD.

Now let me^d condole with thee; let us sit down together in the truest penitence, and take counsel how we may fare better. Begin from the very

beginning ; disavow what thou hast done amiss ; forsake thy self-willed course, the result of false imaginings ; renounce thy misdirected activities ; renounce the places and interests thou hast unjustly seized ; repent of the wrong thou hast done to others ; and let us pray to GOD that we may have the peace of mind. What advantage is it to any man to lose his peace and gain the whole world ? And what peace is possible when passion and ill-will are burning within ? What peace is possible when the unquenchable thirst of self-interest parches up the whole heart ? Leave these scenes of strife and cruelty, therefore ; retire from the battlefield of the enemies of GOD. Let us go where there is rest for the spirit and opportunity for doing good. Let us find the ground where we may offer up our devotions for our soul's good, leaving GOD to rule the affairs of His own kingdom. Take up the neglected work of self-improvement. When a man's soul is in health, the whole household of GOD begins to regain its health. When the individual is at peace, the community is at peace. As one man may destroy a great deal, so one

man may restore a great deal. Thou, my son, art bound to show the example. Suffer the spirit of GOD to remake through thy well-doing what thou or others have unmade with their misdeeds. Of destruction there has been enough. Thou hast done thine will to thine enemy, now show him some kindness and forgiveness. Thou hast long enough battled with error, now have some sympathy for the wandering and the darkened. Thou hast now known men, even the very best and worst of men, and hast seen how the purest things are mixed with impurity, how the most loving can be sometimes hateful. Art thou free thyself from all these gross and vile inner admixtures? Relent, therefore, repent of thy hard judgments, and even amongst the very bad in thy neighbourhood wait and watch for a great deal of unknown excellence. Whom the All-holy hath not forsaken, how canst thou forsake? In whom so many see virtue, what ails thee that thou canst see nothing but wickedness? The old times have now gone by, when nothing but the bright side of men's nature appeared; the old blessedness has now vanished, amidst which nothing

but sentiment and enthusiasm characterised thy relations to thy neighbours. ' Now thou hast seen a good deal of the dark side, now thou hast felt a good deal of bitterness. The darkness and the bitterness may not be wholly thy own making. But then there is all the greater reason for thee to turn the tide of things, to meet bitterness with sweetness, and darkness with light. Yes, the times have changed. The agencies of evil are abroad, untruthfulness shows a strange tendency to triumph ; good men are harrassed ; bad men seem to have it all their own way ; the enemies of GOD'S Dispensation boast that they have defeated it and destroyed it. Now, my son, it is time to be knit with every one who does not declare that he is against thee, now is the time to remake the fold, and rebuild the house that GOD may be glorified and there may be peace on earth !

A Call^e to Worship.

MY son, praise GOD the giver of all good, bless the Spirit whose presence is hallowed, whose thought maketh the heart joyous and brings into it sanctity and wisdom. Feel the contrasts of life that strangely set forth His glorious bounties, bringing after sadness much peace, after illness sweet healing, constantly changing scene and objects and the moods of the devout mind. He built up these great hills that lift up their giant forms one above another, cleaving the pure air, touching and reaching beyond the blue heavens—fit emblems of the Spirit's own immensity. These snow-crowned mountains, my son, guard our great country like nature's ramparts, or like the sword of the Almighty stretching from end to end and overshadowing us all. Behold on those stupendous heights the mansions of GOD where He reigns on His white throne, and the blessed who worship Him and throng around the Holy of

holies. Where are now the dung-heaps of the town, the unseemly sights and smells and clamours that depress the mind? Bless GOD in these dark forests, in the lofty glades of the royal pine and oak, where in early dawn and evening twilight hides the hallowed gloom full of the solemnity of the unspeakable Presence. My son, tremble, bow thine head, and meditate on GOD'S majesty. Aye, amidst the cloistered woods there glides the radiance of the morning and evening sun, sweetened and mellowed like molten gold, or like the richness of some exceedingly precious wine. Drink that wine in the ecstasy of devout thought, drink the light and radiance of GOD, and let thy soul dance in delight like the quivering leaf over thy head. Far, indeed, from the vulgar glare of the town, from its pale sickly lamps, behold the luminaries of the night in these consecrated skies. Is there any end to the shades and varieties of light that is perpetually shed from the great heavens? Light is a marvellous thing in all its ever-shifting revelations; in all its countless brilliancies and sweetnesses it suggests a transcendent glory. Verily

GOD is light. He covers all the universe in the radiance of His garments, He purifies the impure, gives beauty to what is pure, and causes the faces of all His creatures to shine. My son, bless GOD in the realms of light, uncover thy head and thy heart, and let the brightness of His countenance anoint thee many times in the day.

He hath taken thee away from the cruel speech of thine enemies, from the foul words that issue each hour of the day from the mouths of men and women, the wretched brawls and gibes of the city streets, and taken thee where the trees softly speak to each other in the language of the wind, speak or sigh or moan or rage; and where the rooks are cawing as they wheel round the valley; where the unseen birds hide their plumage, but cannot hide their melody which comes thrilling through the woods, now faint, now loud, now making the air resound. They sing to thee, my son—the unpaid choir whose hymns have gone up from time's infancy when the children of the Rishis shouted for joy. Turn to thy worship, O slothful man, as these matins and vespers are

chanted to spiritual music. The human singer of thy sanctuary is tired of his song, the gates of the house of prayer are closed against thee, thy oil-lamps have been put out long ago. In the green sanctuaries of nature let thy voice of adoration be heard. Where the hillside is dotted and starred with wild flowers, the offspring of the morning, where the stones are mantled with thick tender moss, where the ferns are trembling like plumes on some princely crown, where the grass is growing in the shady nook, and the great oaks are casting their paternal shadow over all, there, my son, take thy seat alone, and there bless and praise GOD who is the giver of all good.

On the Secret of Peace.

MY son, know there can be no progress in spiritual life without much inward peace, and there can be no peace in self-will. In obedience, in submission, there is peace. Peace comes from a higher will, a stronger nature, a purer and wiser spirit than thine own to which thou art called to submit. Deep thought is good, it is restful in its way. Deep study also has its happiness. A loving heart is most often the source of joy-getting as well as joy-giving. And a good character is always a strength and a consolation. All these things learn to acquire. But let me tell thee that, though, indeed, thou mayst hope to enjoy intervals of repose out of them, the perfect peace of the soul comes from elsewhere. Self-will is the cause of a thousand sorrows, one might say of all sorrow. Submission to a Higher Will is very hard oftentimes. Painful at first; but, if practised, it brings without fail the blessedness of peace in

the end. Is it not an impossible, unreasonable, unmanly thing to submit? Individuality, we are taught, is the essence of manhood; self-respect is the hinge on which turns the whole machinery of the modern man. Not to follow that rule is to unlearn the whole lesson of Western civilisation. But, nevertheless, thou dost also know and often feel the bitterness of self-will, art not wholly unaware of the calmness and joy of surrender to GOD. Let me ask whence comes the wish to submit. Comes it not from the trust that one feels in another? Thou canst wholly trust thy counsel in a lawsuit, canst safely commit thy case into his hands, and submit to every direction he thinks it necessary to give. Thou dost the same about thy medical adviser; thou dost the same about every kind of rightful adviser. Then again thou canst submit where thou lovest. Even a giant yields to a frivolous enchantress. Love disarms self-will, lulls suspicion, arouses enthusiasm, and creates a nameless expectancy that is sufficient antidote to all the ill-humours of the mind. If faith and love combine, submission becomes not

only possible but easy, not only easy but a source of positive happiness. But such trust and love, so universally seen in material, social and worldly concerns, are nearly absent in religious life. A man is quite willing to trust and obey his doctor, his engineer, his legal adviser, his friend, but as soon as he comes in contact with his pastor he must argue, have a difference, assert his individuality, believe in his own judgment, in short he feels he is on terms of equality with the man.

Alas, it is too true that men who offer to take in their hands the guidance of others' souls are oftentimes unworthy of their confidence. Men who have thus confided have been frequently misled, so that we have come to the sad conclusion not to trust any one but the All-holy GOD. Happy, indeed, shouldst thou be, O man, whoever thou art, howsoever small, if thou couldst truly discern the purpose of the blessed spirit of GOD in all thy concerns, great or little; 'thrice happy, if thou shouldst yield wholly and heartily to that purpose. Indeed, that is the prime object of the peculiar religious dispensation in which we

all believe. But thou art so blinded by pride, prejudice, sin and doubt, that at the moment of emergency thou dost fail to know the mind of GOD and even thy own right mind, and dost act at the bidding of the uppermost impulse, not knowing what thou dost. When the time comes to reckon up the consequences, thou findest thyself farther from GOD than thou hadst been before. This has been thy experience, not once, not twice, but again and again. Though, indeed, we have access under the present law to the direct communion of the Spirit, yet that does not abolish the old law of looking up for guidance to those who have special relations and responsibility to be our guardians in religious life, who are called and appointed, as it were, to take charge of some of the children of the common Father ; because we are all born in the same household as elders and youngers, as shepherds and sheep, with mutual duties that no one should dare to ignore or set aside. It is impossible, self-willed as thou art, always to know clearly the mind of the All-holy. It is most dangerous to believe in thine own judg-

ments as the purposes of GOD. Thou hast had a hundred illustrations of the danger. Where then canst thou find the peace and rest thou dost long for? Seek the mind of GOD with all diligence, trust Him and love Him. But have at hand some men who know thee, who can clearly point out things to thee, and contradict thy self-sufficient notions. Have at hand men whose unselfishness, pureness and wisdom have been tested by thee, and in whom, therefore, thou canst place thy trust and love without question. Faith is the firm foundation of peace, love is the sure cause of security, submission is the unfailing source of repose. The means of acquiring faith and love and obedience of GOD is to have faith, love and obedience unto man. But true human relations are appointed from on high. Find out thy friend in GOD, find out in whom GOD is best represented for thy guidance and safe-keeping. Unhappy, indeed, thou art if no such man is available; happy if thou hast found him; but most unhappy if, having found him, thou hast failed to give him that trust, love and submission without which there is no peace in life.

Most happy is that man who discovers the agreement of his own heart with the counsel of the righteous man, as well with the Voice of GOD in his conscience.

On Special Blessings.

MY son, it is a wonderful joy to be conscious that you have the blessing of the Most High. Every man has benefits given him from above, but few are blessed with knowing and feeling from whom those benefits come. Every true blessing cometh out of the fulness of the love of GOD, and none recognise or enjoy it but such as receive love with love. Love for GOD, then, is the source of the wonderful consolation that comes of being blessed with the sense of the love of GOD. My son, it is in the nature of the Eternal Mother to love and bless all who are born of Her; but it is not in the nature of every son and daughter so born to love and bless the Mother with a whole heart; and unless you know how to love, you cannot understand love. Hence man's highest love for man, or GOD'S love for man, is so seldom understood. Some men call it luck, some call it merit, some call it reward,

few are inclined to think that the happiness of life is the blessing of GOD. Those who do think so, surely find these blessings continually on the increase till all life is an unbroken blessedness. Know, my beloved, to the devout every morsel of food and every mouthful of water is a benediction, every breath of wind and every ray of sunshine is a grace. But how few are devout, or having a devout mood can retain it at all times! A man who had schooled himself to love GOD at all times equally, is given to live in the mansions of the blessed, and is an immortal in the midst of these mortal scenes.

So much about the blessings of GOD in general. But there are special blessings. As there is special providence, so there is special love from the Father for each one of us, who in the duties and difficulties of life have formed special relations with Him. Or, rather, it is not we who have formed such relations, but the Spirit of GOD himself. For it was not Jesus that first called GOD our Father, but it was GOD who first called Jesus, as He rose out of the baptismal stream, "This is my beloved

Son in whom I am well pleased." It is He, the Father, therefore, who forms special relations where He sees fit. GOD sends His chosen instruments on earth to work His chosen purposes, whether it be the teaching of wisdom or illustration of truth, whether it be the unfolding of beauty or the revelation of religion. The elect of GOD have His special blessings. My son, judge and say art thou a chosen instrument in the hands of GOD? Art thou a message-bearer; if so, what is the specific end thou must accomplish? For it is special work that is worthy of special encouragement, it is special suffering that demands special relief, special devotion draws down special response, and special love calls forth special blessing. Thus a special calling on the part of man makes the condition for special providence on the part of GOD. Deep is the affliction of the servant of GOD, no one knows how deep, bitter distress is the result of his experience; his labours are unrequited and incessant, and loneliness, and helplessness, and unspeakable want fill his heart to the brim. The voice of men's praise is vain, their sympathy is often hollow, their love is

for the moment only. But the call of duty is stern and unremitting, the cup of suffering comes from above, the spirit is weary, the flesh is weak, and the world is as if made of iron. Then comes the need of special blessing, then, O my son, I have heard the voice coming from behind the ages :—
“ The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble ; the name of the GOD of Jacob defend thee ; send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion ; remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice ; grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel ; we will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our GOD will set up our banners ; the Lord fulfil all thy petitions.”

On the Man of Faith.

MY son, be a man of faith if thou dost wish for undying life. In the ways of life there is an end, and a speedy one, to the capacity of reason—alas, reason often turns to unreason; there is also an end somewhere to the capacity of sentiment, natural emotion tends to become dull and torpid; and also moral character grows up to a certain limit and then it ceases to grow. But faith in GOD and life immortal has no limit: it is unceasing, ever on the way to perfection. I allow, reason has a kind of faith of its own; I know very many religious men whose foundation of faith is their reason, who have combined both trust and emotion in that reason, and these are men to whom reverence is always due. Most of us are of this species; in fact, the religion of modern times, however, men may differ in their creeds, is the religion of reason. Learn to know the difference between reason and intellect. But my child, be assured that the deepest

realities of the spirit are comprehended by faith, and the insight of faith only. The being and attributes of GOD are never fully clear to the intellect. The existence and blessings of a future life are never fully clear to the intellect. We have our opinions on these matters, and they may be well-founded or not; devout opinions satisfy the intellect and the reason. But in the utmost stress of life I have found opinions always giving way, and the best men tottering on the brink of unbelief. Faith, on the other hand, becomes firmer and intenser as difficulties increase. We often mistake opinions and emotions for faith. I cannot express except by calling it an instinct, a second sight; I cannot define it except by calling it an inner sense and experience; I cannot interpret it any more than I can such primary perceptions as those of light and sound in man. Those who have the experience of faith as apart from intellect know what I mean; only this remember that the man of faith sometimes acts in defiance of what men call reasonable or natural. But I must hasten to say that faith has its reason which is beyond ordinary reason. It

believes in a nature that is beyond ordinary nature. It lays down laws of conduct, makes discoveries of truth, perceives, recognises, judges, commands as the Spirit alone can. All spiritual wisdom is the result of that mental light which you might very well call the Word of GOD. Prophetic wisdom, spiritual insight, the instinct of the seer must include the intellect, must, in the long run, be found most reasonable. Men of faith are often taken to be visionaries, and justly so; but all visionaries are not men of faith. For all deep and transcendent insight necessarily appears as vision at first, until men's eyes are opened, and they begin to see what those saw who were sent to enlighten them. When Festus accused Paul of madness, he did so candidly; for he was blind to the realities of which the Apostle discoursed, learned as he was in the laws of the Roman and the Hebrew. But being blind, Festus did not see that the madness of St. Paul would be the sanity of the world when the centuries would roll off the darkness of men's faith.

But enough has been said by all sorts of men at all sorts of time on the quality of faith. You may

ask the practical question, how one may acquire it. All men are born with it, some with more, some with less. Some lose it by disuse and misuse, some add to it by religious education, religious example and above all by the grace of GOD. It is, perhaps, natural for those who have it not to disbelieve those who have it, and equally natural for those who have it to look down upon those who do not have it. But thou, my son, shalt not disbelieve nor look down upon anyone; for the fullest measure of the true quality of this heavenly faith thou dost not possess thyself, and it will be long before thou shalt have it. Of course men go through religious exercises and have awe for certain scriptures, certain symbols, certain sacred objects and certain men of religion called prophets or saints or priests. Ridicule not such beliefs. I tell thee from a spiritual point of view overfaith, even false faith, is better than no faith. As for thyself, when thou prayest, take heed that every word thou dost utter, be they few or be they many—I advise thee to speak few rather than many words before the throne of the Almighty—take heed, I say

that every word is spoken in simple, deliberate, entire trust. Do not say anything which thou dost not believe or the meaning of which thou dost not understand. Let every sentence clearly represent thy state which thou consciously, reverently, trustfully placest in the presence of the All-holy Witness. When a word thus enriched with sincerity goes from thee, it surely returns bringing a response and inspiration. The answer to the prayer of faith is unfailing and immediate. You do not realise this because you seldom make prayers of faith; so often you make intellectual or sentimental or rhetorical, or mere formal prayers. To learn to have faith is to learn it through and during one's devotions, because then thy mind is best prepared to receive the heavenly seed; the seed then received most readily grows. To practise the habit of faith is to practise it in all thy daily acts of life and to hold by it in difficult times. You^a bathe or eat or rest or walk or read or talk with holy men or go to the house of worship.³ Each one of these acts might be sanctified by simple⁴ child-live faith. Bath becomes baptism, food becomes sacrament, rest becomes

resurrection, walk becomes contemplation, and the house of God becomes the veritable heaven on earth, when they are purified by faith. You honor the scriptures, reverence pious men, respect sanctuaries and look with tenderness upon the graves of your dear departed ones. Now revelation and light come to make their abode in holy books ; pious men come to the earth like divine beings. Sanctuaries are filled with a halo not of this world ; and those honored graves seem to open unto the renewal of the dead when the light of faith rests on them. One word more. The enterprise of work is inseparably knit with faith. Great responsibility brings great faith. Great faith enjoins great responsibilities of work. Work is not before faith, faith is before work ; but there is no faith without work, and no lasting work without faith. My son, I have already said, faith is natural ; make room for natural faith in the expressions and acts of thy life, in the events, undertakings and objects that surround thee. Work in faith, receive in faith, rest in faith, worship in faith, love in faith, live in faith, die in faith. Be thou a man of faith always !

To Live in other Men.

MY son, a man's own individual life is not his deepest or truest life ; the life of the community whereto he belongs is his deepest life. Call it brotherhood, call it congregation or church or nation, however you may call it, this collective corporate life makes the higher existence of the man of GOD. In this there is undying, ever-growing life, an immortal selfless humanity wherein the man of GOD abides, whether he be alive or not, whether he be in this world or in the next. For, my son, thou wilt easily perceive that a man, if he live all by himself and to himself, liveth but a short time, for even the longest life is but a moment when it is weighed against eternity. Like a handful of grass, man's life is green and shining in the morning, it withers into stubble and hay before the night comes, and it is soon cut down, thrown into the oven, and forgotten. The great and the little, the famous and the obscure ; all alike sink into

the sea of the inane and are as if they never came into the world. This is real death so far as the present world is concerned; and who knows what counterpart it may have in the dark future that is beyond the grave? Immortality here is the sure earnest of immortality hereafter. But behold, if a man be so merged in the life of other men that he is no longer alone, but lives and breathes and grows and is reborn in the great brotherhood whereof he is a member, inasmuch as a people cannot die, but is filled continually by succeeding generations, in so much he cannot die. His life is not one life, but is made of the lives of many, of those who are now, of those who had been before, and of those who are to come by and by. Learn to live in other men, therefore, and let them live in thee. Let all that is of self, and therefore exclusive, solitary, and perishable, grow continually less and less, and let that which is of all humanity, and therefore universal, grow more and more in thy character. This is true humanity, and therefore divine and immortal. •

But thou mayst ask, how can a man live outside

his own self and have his life in the community? By making the sorrows and joys of other people his own; by taking upon himself the sins and shortcomings of the brotherhood; and by striving to make it better and holier through living a perfect life according to the standard set up in his heart by the Spirit of GOD. Great, indeed, is the inducement to leave a stiff-necked, hard-hearted people to its own ways and fly to the bosom of GOD for the rest which the tired worker needs so much for himself; strong is the motive to retire from the world and live a hidden life with the spirit of the immortals and with the Spirit of GOD in whom they are to be found. But the Eternal who dwells in all men as Life and as Humanity says, Nay, Nay. Solve thy own difficulties with thy GOD, be reconciled with thy reproachful conscience, settle thy account with thy household and thy neighbour, forgive thine enemy, forget thy wrongs: be at peace with the world as soon as thou canst. But when thine own wants are satisfied, even before they are satisfied, devote thyself to make thy community richer, purer, happier by the wealth of spiritual

things GOD has given to thee. For as thou givest, and the more thou givest, thus and the more it will be given back to thee; GOD'S bounties will be multiplied unto thee in the giving, and whatever real wants thou mayst have will be supplied. If by self-giving thou art able to serve humanity and be at one with it, what is best in humanity will be thine—all its greatness, its tenderness, its righteousness, its peace, its blessedness, and divine fulness. It is by genuine sympathy with what is deep in the community wherein thy lot is cast, it is by sharing thy wisdom and thy peace with all men and by spending thyself for them that the stain of self-love, the source of all other stains, can be wiped away. My son, be no longer the citizen of a mean city, be the citizen of the New Kingdom which is the, mother, of all mankind. Be no longer a sectary and bigot, but enter thy name into the great family of the elect of GOD, and labour thou in the vineyard the fruits of which all men may eat. Forget not thine own special fold, forget not thine own people or thine own land or the covenant of GOD with thine own house-hold, but keep thyself faithful in all things.

Remember the speck of cloud which gradually expands to overspread the whole heavens. Behold the one centre of light which has for its circumference the whole planetary system. Reflect how one man has made himself the central figure of all mankind. And he, therefore, who, self-forgetful, lives and merges himself in the great circle of GOD's children who are immediately around him, likewise ennobles himself until he is made one with all humanity, and its fulness enters into him for all time.

God different in each.

MY son, if thou hadst the insight thou wouldst see that each man of GOD has a different view of the Parent Spirit from his neighbour, and yet men's beliefs and ideas about the nature of the Supreme are universal and similar. If it is too much to say that each man has a GOD of his own, it is certainly not too much to say that unto each man He makes a new revelation of His nature and of His relationship. The sages who wrote the Vedas called Him Heaven-Father, and Christ called Him Our Father in Heaven, but to the latter the Father was very different from what He was to the former, yet to both undoubtedly He was the true Father. It is the same instinct, but not the same realisation of the instinct. GOD is one, but to each man He has a new face, a new form, a new message, a new kind of personality. Therefore, inasmuch as a man really knows and loves GOD that man's worship is new, his aspiration new, his life new. Yet God is the

Ancient of days, the One without a second, the Immutable in whom there is no change nor a shadow of turning. If this is true, then, my son, thou canst find the reason why in each religion there are varying conceptions of the Deity, varying ordinances of worship and varying laws of life. What is true of each man is true in a larger sense of great masses of men, and the unity of the Godhead is in this way broken into thousands of fragments which go to fill up the pantheon of religions. How does it happen that though man's nature is essentially one, and you find its general features the same everywhere, yet no man is like unto his neighbour? What is called the individuality of men is the cause of mankind's greatness. GOD has given to our race an endless variety of minds, notwithstanding its oneness; and the deepest cause why we are so various is that He has implanted a new thing of His spirit in each man and each people. Each man views and understands and worships Him, not exactly as others do. For this reason men of little insight infer that there are many gods, that there can be no certain knowledge of GOD, and it is

impossible for men to have a common faith. But men who are wise conclude that, though GOD is one, His self-revelations, His dealings and His relations with men are manifold and innumerable. No man can trust or worship or teach with authority and with effect unless GOD be to him something peculiarly his own, unless his whole nature finds satisfaction in GOD'S nature. A universal Supreme Being always lacks force and personality. He is vague and shadowy and likely to melt away under the stress of trying circumstance. A concrete person is the true object of trust. But can He be discovered till He reveal himself? Have you in this sense realised GOD? Has He truly become to you what no other thing, no other being, is? Can you in His companionship find the joy that makes up for life's cruel separations and solitudes? Can you in His counsel find the wisdom which solves the ceaseless perplexities of life? Do you feel His influence and His rule are making you continually a different man, so that you do not yourself know what you may become in the end? My son, a personal and true GOD is an awful being. He,

indeed, blesses, but He gives man no rest. He, indeed, blesses but there is no end to His demands. He saves and comforts, but He does not spare any man from chastisement for a single sin or shortcoming. Nowadays men make their own GOD. In other times GOD made men, and such men were heroes and saviours. In these days men want to make men; and when they see they are powerless to create, they quarrel, they persecute, they become cynics and misanthropes. In other times men followed GOD-inspired men, and consented to be moulded by them. In thine own nature, however humble thou be, the freshness of the Divine face is hidden, GOD is something exceedingly like thyself, I mean thy higher truer self. Know thy GOD, thou wilt know thyself, know thyself, thou wilt know thy GOD. Dare to be, to do and to say the best that is in thee, dare to live up to the highest model of life in thee. This is, indeed, difficult; but in the midst of the difficulty thou wilt find some day, unexpectedly revealed within thyself, a countenance which thou never foundest before. Unknown yet familiar, exceedingly like thee yet unlike, privately, peculiarly

ever thine own is thy GOD. Have the courage to trust Him, the heart to love Him and the determination to obey Him in all things great and small. Then thy insight shall every day grow, thy wisdom shall mature, thy sanctity perfect itself, till thou hast the joy to feel sure that GOD is thine, and thou art His for ever.

Higher Religion.

MY son, there is so much to be borne, so much to be done, there is so much worship, so much contemplation, so much sacrifice, so much service, all but unknown to thee, certainly unpractised, that it needs a greater spirit than thine to carry the weight of thy destiny. O, my son, thy destiny is great, but thou art small and lowly. Let all humanity visit thee, let all divinity make its abode in thee; then thou shalt be raised to the level of what thou hast got to be before thou goest hence. Why art thou forgetful of thy obligations, my son, content to eat and drink and labour as the common herd of unbelievers? There is so much misery, sin, degradation, untruth around that it is strange thou canst turn thy back to everything, and be immersed in what belongs to thyself and thy own advancement alone. And even concerning thyself art thou satisfied with what thou knowst of GOD, with the intensity and reality of thy worship, with

the sanctity and loftiness of thy life so far as thou hast acquired it, and with thy relations with those around thee? Is this present state of thine the reach and goal of thy endeavours? If it is not, what thinkest thou of thy further course? There is deeper communion yet than thou knowst of, profounder and more glorious insight both into the nature of GOD and man, higher and more devoted service than thou hast practised, and purer and more joyous saintliness than thou hast experienced. The beginning of religious life is impulse, the end of religious life is absorption. The impulse is from the Indwelling Spirit, the absorption is in the Indwelling Spirit. This absorption is not the forfeiture of self but the perfection of self, the oneness with GOD. But between the beginning and the end there are many and many stages of life, in one or other of which most men are content to rest. Unending advancement towards the goal of oneness with GOD means a continuous discipline and struggle, an abasement of personality, a surrender of active powers, of health, wealth and independence, which to the ordinary

man is the sorest vexation. For fain would we rest somewhere, yea even on the roadside, so weary are we on the way of our pilgrimage; fain would we cease to labour and suffer, we would yield rather than press on, and imagine that we have acquired GOD and holy living. GOD gives us the contentment of rest if that is what we insist on having; but if thou wouldst rather advance on the higher path of thy destiny and accept the manifold trouble it must bring, gird thyself for thy arduous work, and depend upon the Spirit to guide thee on. From impulse comes belief, and the two together make worship; and many are the souls that find this stage high enough for life's satisfaction. But belief is of many kinds, and worship which comes of impulse is also of many kinds—the highest of either being the result of the advancing spirituality of the man. They all believe and all worship; but to some faith is an absorption and worship is an ecstasy, while to others the one is an opinion, and the other is a routine. But in nothing do men differ so much as in processes of self-sanctification. My son, the word 'sacrifice' is old and common-

place in the dictionary of religion; but no word means more or needs to be studied with greater care. It is simply this, you 'must continually do some sacred act, rise on some higher step of holy living. To most men these sacred acts are nothing but formal acts—bathing or fasting or 'giving alms or burning incense in the fire. These things have little value when you have got used to them. To some men sacred acts are vicariously performed. The priest performs them. There are peace offerings, slaughtered animals and human sacrifices. And to crown all, one great divine man dies for sinners. Faith of any kind has some efficacy, and faith in vicarious atonement is not entirely vain. But a sacrificial act must be an act of self-giving, the giving of something a man holds dear, whether it be time or money or comfort or health or life itself. And the giving must come not out of any desire of gain either in this world or the next, but out of genuine love both for GOD and man. Any claim of credit for self-giving destroys its very essence. On the contrary deem it a grace that thou hast been counted worthy to be called upon

to do anything for the glory of GOD or the love of man. When this kind of sacred self-giving by a repeated succession of acts becomes a man's whole life and when his sacrifice, instead of being performed by fits and starts, becomes an ascending order of moral character, then gradually is he sanctified, then he begins to enter that absorption wherein a man ceases to live for self, and becomes divine.

What is Uncreate in Man ?

My son, I behold in thee an uncreated part as well as a created. What is created is always subject to death, but what is uncreated is undying. The uncreated part in man is the divine part of soul : that which he did not make but brought with him, did not acquire but had given to him ; nor can he throw it away, though, indeed, he might so obscure it for a moment, as to lose it to all appearance. The essence of each man, the deepest and highest part of his being, was in GOD before he came to the world ; he knows this when he really knows what he is and what he is not. How can he unmake that which he never made ; how can that die which was never born ? But his hundred attachments and passions, his hundred worldly interests, stand in the way of his insight, so that he is not able to retain his true self, even if now and then a flash from the light eternal show him momentarily what in him is vain and what is real. My son, when it is said that

a man's "conscience is the voice of GOD," that his reason is "the word of GOD," the matter seems simple enough, but reflect for one moment how much it means. If thy conscience or thy reason is an element of thy higher self, does it not mean that the divine Right and the divine Light makes a part of thine own being, and that what is right and true is for all time, for all men, and above death? You did not make it, you cannot unmake it, you can only follow it; and even if you do not, there it will remain, and other men, better than thyself, will follow it. Dost thou need to be told that this conscience is not the only great thing in man? There is the sense of love, the sense of beauty, the sense of power, all that includes heaven and earth as well as GOD and man. Neither love nor beauty nor power nor being nor right nor truth—nay, not life itself was made by thee ~~nor~~ acquired by thy merit nor subject to thy will; they are in thee, and they are without thee, thou risest to them when thou art in thy highest mood; then they are revealed to thee; and it were better for thee if thou couldst keep to

that height always. Blessed is the man whose life is made up of these divine qualities, and who so uses his relations to his flesh, to the world and to all other things that his whole being finds its reality and its consummation in those qualities. Of what then are they the qualities? For surely there cannot be qualities without a substance, and divine qualities require a divine substance. GOD alone is that substance underlying all things, overshadowing and filling all things. GOD is the life of all men, their bodily life is His divine energy, their soul's life His beauty, truth and love. But the body decays and dissolves we know and see; the soul of the man, however, who lives the life spiritual, does not decay or dissolve, but rises and ripens as the body falls into decay. The essence of this undying soul is the essence of GOD. The essence of GOD is divine power, divine love, divine wisdom, divine holiness, divine joy. And inasmuch as a man lives in these qualities and is made up of them, in so much he is eternal, undying and unborn, of substance Divine, the son and the heir of GOD. Every one has this possibility, but practically very few

care for their divine state. Practically most men are animals, religious men as well as irreligious. For there is a wonderful similitude between the qualities of the spirit and of the animal. Behold, my son, how love means very often a vile impulse of the flesh, how truth means no more than a formal correctness of speech, beauty means a fineness of face, wisdom means the calculation of self-interest and justice means the law of eye for eye and life for life. Content are we to live according to these rules of worldly conversion, content are we if the wild impulses of the animal in us are reduced to some kind of order and understanding. Hence, when the heritage of the soul is claimed or aspired after, the claimant is put down as proud or mad or pantheistic. But whether you comprehend it or not, the fact is there that the divine in man is uncreate and indestructible. The flesh in man is made subject to death—the flesh and all that pertains thereto. The senses and the lower mind, the egoism and its vain exultations and regrets, the world and its changing relations and interests, surely all these dissolve At death

they change so fundamentally as to lose their intensity and significance, and only leave behind them their moral effects, good or evil, which they make upon the soul. But the soul, either in its possibilities of progress or actualities of attainment, is not subject to death, but destined somehow or somewhere to realise what it was sent for, to realise its original oneness with the blessed eternal GOD.

It behoves thee, therefore, O my son, to shake off the weaknesses and mortalities of the creature, and live the uncreated, undying life which is in GOD our source. But these mortal weaknesses beset thee on all sides. The flesh is their home; they must be in greater or lesser intensity, so long as thou art in this world. There is deep purpose in it; because every child of the Spirit can only feel and claim his birthright of divine perfection inasmuch and in so far as he can overcome the craving infirmities of his bodily nature. And if these cravings are suddenly withdrawn without due effort on his own part, what will he overcome; how can he realise his growing power, his ultimate sovereignty, the indwelling, unfailing, ever-increasing help

and comfort of the Spirit? My son, know that in the present limitations of our nature, in the double functions of the soul and of the material body in which it abides, the sonship of GOD, the sameness with GOD, is to be realised only by contrast between the actual and possible, by conscious struggle with and constant victory over the flesh. The contrast is between the decay of the animal and the growth of the spirit the struggle between the impulses of the creature and the inspirations of the Indweller; the victory is that of immortality over death. The decay of our material part, then, is the price to be paid for the spirit, the animal is the sacrifice to be made before the Divine, and death is the condition of immortality. Every dead passion is revived into a sacred enthusiasm, every dead sin becomes a larger experience to rise to our higher self. Behold how that which was our stumbling-block ere while, becomes the means to our salvation, how that which was the enemy of our progress becomes the friend in our path! My son, let us strive together then to overcome the flesh and its creature instincts; let us forsake the

allurements and interests of the world, let the lower standards and rules of the world be left behind; let us live the high angelic existence vouchsafed in the process of communion. For surely, my son, GOD is thy inmost being. His perfections are for thy joy and thy possession. His abode is for thy rest. His glory is for thy crown. Daily fight thy sorrows and sins, knowing that the Father, though unseen, is at hand to fight on thy side. Daily overcome thy doubts and misgivings, and still let the cry arise, "In thee I live and move and have my being."

Personal Service and Universal.

MY son, there is no doubt that thy impulses are good, thy desires and purposes are virtuous, on the whole. But think not that these are sufficient to make for thee the great vocation of thy life. Only the sense of a man's destiny can guide him to the place he was designed to fill. That sense does not come all at once, though its glimmerings are felt from very early in life ; it becomes clearer, as he goes on doing faithfully his daily work and bearing patiently his daily burden. Thou dost well to keep in the path which thy circumstances point to thee ; because that path, as thou walkest on, will widen in thy sight, and lead up to the higher path, the path of destiny which penetrates into the sanctuary of the Eternal. Hast thou finished thy calling ; hast thou laid thy hand on it ; art thou on the way to its accomplishment ? These are questions which thou alone art competent to answer. Only let me tell thee a man comes to the world not

merely to serve a general purpose, to be a good man on the whole, but to do some very specific work to which he must bend all his natural resources; because if he goes away without finishing it, his life, even though he be a virtuous and religious man, will be vain and unhappy. Need any one be reminded that the destined work of a man is purposed by the eternal GOD who created him, who is in him, and who shapes his ends, however roughly he may conceive or effect them? And there are as many destinies of men as there are purposes of GOD who has neither beginning nor end, whose ways are beyond counting and past finding out. All revelation, inasmuch as it is to a particular person or people, is personal and, therefore, special; it is the revelation of definite work to be done and a definite emergency to be met. And such is the expansive power of truth under the operation of the Divine Spirit, that in the course of time the specific becomes general and the personal becomes universal. The special commandment to Jesus was to found the Kingdom of Heaven according to the ancient prophecy of the Hebrew scrip-

tures. The kingdom was at first understood to belong to one nation and given to one person. But though the work began as a personal work for a peculiar people, because the revelation of it was truly divine it has become universal. The commandment to St. Paul was to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. In Paul's time the Gentiles comprised certain peoples outside Judea but in its close neighbourhood. It was a commandment to Paul only, not to any other of the apostles who were at the time more important than he. But he gave effect to the revelation with the whole might of his great soul; and in course of time every Christian missionary has made Paul's vocation his own, and their work includes all mankind. Thus the special under the grace of the spirit of GOD becomes universal, and the apostle of one small people becomes the apostle of all mankind. Indeed, a man is apt to be lost in the conception of universal work, even when it is revealed to him by GOD; he is himself the creature of time and circumstance, he is limited and small. Is the revelation of truth great or small? My son, truth when it comes down from

the heavens is small as a mustard seed, but it has infinite expansion in it. GOD is defined in the Upanishads as the smallest of the small and also as the greatest of the great. The minuteness of the Infinite comes first, the augustness comes afterwards. But when the pentecostal shower descends, small gifts and great gifts, the minute and the vast, are all bound to come and be one. Nothing of a destiny that is confined to one man, to one sect, to small bounds, can exalt thee, O my son, to the loftiness of thy being: only what is unconfined and great meets the endless needs of thy soul. But GOD is great, life is small. In the graciousness of His compassion for man He condenses what is eternal into an individual revelation that is specific and practical, so that no one may have the excuse of saying that the divine purpose is too august for human performance, and that the Lord is an exacting master.

My son, seek and wait for the daily revelation of thy destiny at the doors of thy GOD. Pray without ceasing to be told why thou wast sent here. Cast up thy accounts to see how much of thy great work

remains still unfinished. Finish thy morrow's work while it is still called to-day, and the afternoon's duty in the morning ; for thou knowst not when thy time may come. Fear not to make a small beginning when the Eternal inspires thee in thy course. Fear not to hear and obey the still small Voice that never refuses to speak to any man. O tired labourer, hold on yet a while in the day's duty ; pilgrim, press on in thy course for another hour. Be faithful to thy vow, whatever it is, and forget not for a moment that all life-work, divinely ordained and faithfully carried out, belongs not to time only, but to all men and to ages.

Of Life's Object.

It has often saddened me to see that when a man lives for the glory of GOD he is accused of living for his own ends, and when a man lives for his own ends he takes the credit of living for the glory of GOD. My son, do not, therefore, hastily judge a virtuous man; but whatever appears good and true in thy neighbour's character, whether it be an act of devotion or an act of usefulness, help it according to thy means and opportunities. As for thyself, calmly and carefully decide what thou hast to live for and use all thy powers accordingly. A man may not necessarily live for vile or selfish ends, and yet he may not live to do the will of GOD. The end of knowledge, the end of morality, the end of culture are certainly no mean ends; and when a man proposes these as the objects of his life he is not to be trifled with. The interests of a party, of a society, large or small, high aims and worthy ambitions are not

to be contemned but treated with respect and sympathy. Oftentimes these things are for the honour of GOD, at least not to His dishonour. But there is much higher than they. The very word of the Spirit settles the object of man's life.

I ask thee what did the saints of this country, or of any other, live for? The excellent ends I have enumerated above, knowledge or culture or public spirit, they did not understand and did not care to preach. They lived to worship GOD and teach others to worship; they lived to establish the examples of holy living, to lead men to find who and what is GOD, to establish the commonwealth whereof GOD is the head. They burnt with the enthusiasm of the love of GOD, of the love of man; they wanted to make invisible things visible, and turn opinions to undoubting faith. They lived in a world within and beyond this world, that of living truth, of unselfish love; they lived in the undying world, and they laboured to draw men thither. Perhaps they did not succeed with a great many, but they did succeed with some. And the few multiplied, and time tried their worth, and the object of their life

was crowned with fulfilment. Every life-object that is great and true is a revelation of purpose from GOD. It may not come in thunder and lightning as the Mosaic Commandments; it comes often in those moods of the man when he is most likely to understand its meaning, till the meaning is plain enough to him it keeps coming. But when the man has known the purport of the Indweller's revelation, if he is indifferent to it and neglectful, the purpose for which his life is given him becomes fainter and fainter, till in the crowd of changeful motives in his mind it is lost sight of. Or if it reappears at rare intervals, it is to show the disobedient one the contrast between what he might have been and what he is. It reappears as the bloody ghost of a murdered possibility to warn, to reproach, to bring fear and shame! But when a man accepts devoutly and humbly the revelation of the purpose of his life, depends, trusts, prays, and, as much as lies in him, labours to make that purpose real, the Voice in the heart that first spoke it forth, not only becomes stronger, clearer and more comforting, but reveals also the means, ways and men through whom this

life-object can be carried out. For all true and vital revelation is not merely general, but definite, practical and detailed. But, my son, deceive not thyself with the thought that lofty life-objects can be realised by the trust or prayer or obedience of a single day. Remember how difficult it is for a man to earn a living, to acquire a branch of learning or position or influence; what trouble to attain it, what trouble to retain it. How then can it be expected that the attainment of great life-objects, the doing of the appointed purposes of GOD, and the great destiny of men and communities, can be accomplished without trouble? Be prepared, therefore, for a thousand disappointments, for a thousand strifes and oppositions, before the end of thy existence meets with its fulfilment. The end of life must be the work of a lifetime. If thou hast partly done that work, blessings be on thee. But thou must do it more fully and more earnestly in future. Every step of the great God-ward journey, O my son, must be by overcoming some obstacle. Every ascending stair to GOD'S footstool means some fresh act of self-

conquest, some new toil unrewarded, some new adventure unhelped, some unfamiliar trial met without shrinking. And so on and so on in life's long uneven path, the goal at moments seeming near, and again far removed in dimness and uncertainty. But near or remote in fulfilment, the vow presses upon the soul of the faint pilgrim panting for his home in his GOD, and even if it be with his last breath he must keep to the path. From a general point of view the object of every devout life is the same, namely, to be at one with GOD. But in every special case that object differs because men's gifts are different; they are adapted to different kinds of work, and they are led to these different works in different ways. My son, find out thy gifts, aptitudes; and ways, and then the special ends to accomplish which thou wert sent will become plain and practical. The deepest prayer which a man can make is that his true nature may be revealed to him, and his true work may be placed within his reach. I have known very good and devout men mistaken about their calling, labouring at trifles, proving themselves

failures in the end. I have known very common place men finding out the true purpose of their lives and leaving saintly examples behind them. I have also known men who found their work, pursued it for a time with great promise and then, led away by a passion or an interest or an evil influence, fell away, to their own shame and the sorrow of all spectators. O my son, the ways of the world are beset with delusions and dangers, and the impulses of the heart are often treacherous and wicked. Neither talent avails, nor activity nor good nature nor the profession of a belief; only the light of the mercy of GOD availeth !

The Majesty of God.

DOST thou, my son, indulge in the fancy that GOD is comprehended of thee, that the Supreme is what thou thinkest in the paltriness of thy thought; or dost thou reflect definitely at all on the matter as to what GOD is? Of one thing be sure, very few men really agree in their deepest conceptions about the nature of the Great Father, because their thoughts are ever imperfect, their powers are at fault, their teachings inadequate, their experiences insufficient, and their faith falls short of the august Reality. GOD is manifold, and strikes men in different lights according as their natures are made, or their beliefs moulded, or their thoughts ruled, or their hearts purified. He, therefore, is somewhat different from each man's conception; none may say, "I have known Him," though everyone can say, "I have faith in Him," though even some may say, "I have seen Him." To see is, indeed, to know somewhat, but not to know perfectly; remember

how even the men and the things we always see and know, we do not know perfectly. We have known Him in His self-revelations both in Nature and in Mankind, we have known Him as often manifest in our hearts; but who knows how much there is in Him yet unrevealed? How then can any one conceive or know perfectly the infinite and eternal GOD? In vainly thinking and saying that we know, we have coarsened, belittled and degraded the Divine Majesty. Instead of man being made in the image of GOD, GOD is made in the image of man. He is beyond all that is of matter or man, far above all that is said in the scriptures, far above all we utter in adoration of His glory, far above all our contemplation and thought; our loftiest imaginations cannot penetrate the veil of His self-concealment. Thou canst not live without His worship and praise; that is thy deepest joy and truest life: wisdom and blessedness, sanctity and trust come from approaching Heaven's portal with lofty worship and devout thought. But all the same the transcendent Person whom thou utterest or approachest, is beyond and far, inaccessible to thee in His expanse depth, and

greatness. How can the passing moment, known as present time, and how can the fraction of that moment as reflected in man's life, how can the fraction of that fraction counted as thy hour of worship, how can the ripple of an event or the span of a personal existence, hold within itself the glories of all that is past, of all that is to be, of all that is neither past nor present nor future, but always the same in shoreless eternity? How can a vibrating wave of ether, a quivering nerve of the eye or ear, an atom of perfume, a molecule of something called matter, how can a flower or a star or a human countenance contain the Infinite? Nor can a suggestion in the something known as mind, a breath of aspiration, a flash of thought, a flutter of imagination, hold within itself what the heavens cannot contain; nor the heaven of heavens, what the limitless worlds of unconceived space do but suggest as the Infinite! We can know Him as He is related to us, to each one of us. But how little are we, and how passing and shadowy the relations of our life, or the disturbances in us which we call our thoughts! He is the unrelated absolute Being; the

uttermost hem of His garments who has touched? He is the transcendent, the beyond; we cannot think Him, we cannot utter Him, we bow in the dust before His presence!

But if all this is true—if GOD is beyond the perceptions of matter, beyond the suggestions of the mind, beyond all teachings of all humanity, all lessons of history, all impressions of all sensible things, O my son, how is any thought of GOD possible? How shall we know Him; where shall we search Him; is not every search vain? Beyond the knowable is the unknowable, and the unknowable cannot be worshipped. So all religion ceases here, all personal relationship with the Deity.

But happily there is another view of the matter. Though different from everything, what is great as well as what is small is made by GOD, made according to His mind, according to what seemed best in His sight. Not only is that so, but in what He has made He dwells. Now in whatsoever that glory abides it *shows* itself, its halo illumines that object; and you cannot mistake, if you are a man of insight, whose likeness you behold in it. Where then is

God? In everything of matter and of mind, in every form of humanity, in every teaching of history, in every truth of the scriptures. But He is great, infinitely august—how can He be in a thing of this earth which is small and fleeting? Though nothing can contain Him, He contains all things, and the content is full of the Container's mind. Everything has its limit and measure, and according to its capacity it manifests its Maker and Indweller. Within the space of its capacity and the measure of its perfection, then, the glory of GOD'S self-revelation shines in every object and in every man. Theoretically nothing is perfect, practically there *is* perfection on earth. There is a perfect flower, there is a perfect animal, there is a perfect star, aye there is also a perfect man. Every man is not that, nor is every flower, but some are, namely, those that have fulfilled the purpose for which they were created. And inasmuch as a creature has accomplished its destiny, within the measure of its being the perfection of the Godhead dwells bodily. In this sense, it is said the Son of GOD contains the fulness of the Father, and in this sense the Father and the Son are one.

This view of things becomes inevitable as soon as you admit the omnipresence of GOD. Where and in what is GOD not present? He is so glorious that He cannot abide in anything without shedding His glory thereupon. All beautiful and great things, therefore, material or spiritual, historical or moral, show forth the nature of GOD. Those who have faith behold it. All glorious men and women unfold the veiled GOD who abides in them, though His infinity is beyond their power to show. The thimble that is cast in the sea is full of a particle of the shoreless waters, but the sea is more than many such small receptacles. The soul that is immersed in divine perfection is divine, you see GOD in it, though Divinity is much more than any human heart can contain. All hearts, all beneficent activities, all noble sacrifices thus breathe the Divine Being, though GOD is ever more than they. In this way the eye of the devout beholds GOD in all things, and in nothing so much as in themselves and in other men's souls. Everything according to its capacity reveals God. But the capacity is limited. By what? Everything that is material is unconscious, dead,

unloving, bound by the law of necessity. GOD is the opposite of all this. Therefore, it cannot show Him but in a small measure. 'Every man is more or less limited by passion, by ignorance, by time, place, circumstance, self-interest, desire, carnality. GOD is the opposite of all this. Therefore, any one man cannot show Him except in a small measure. Man is, however, progressive; of his possibilities there is no limit. He will slowly outgrow his interests, passions, desires, nay whatever is specially his own. And the more he advances thus, GOD'S self-revelation advances in him. When the grossness of self ceases to obscure the light of GOD Divinity shines in man perfectly. And such a man is the image of GOD. Such a man, behold, there is before all of us in the world's great Exemplar.

Rest in God.

MY son, learn to rest in GOD. Be soothed and comforted by His spirit. Be anxious for nothing, strive with no man, expect almost nothing from anyone, complain not against what befalls thee, have no care but to love and serve thy GOD with all thy strength. Why art thou so unquiet in thy mind, O my son, as if the load of the whole world's weight was thrown on thy shoulders, as if there was no GOD overhead to take charge of the countless things which are of His making, thyself one of the least among them, so full of many frailties and follies? Put thy trust in the great Father, and possess thy soul in peace. For there is no duty, however irksome, that is not appointed from on high, and the weariness of which does not find its relief in the nearness and kindliness of the heart of GOD. The purpose of thy life is divinely destined, thy aims, so far as they are spiritual, are from heaven also, thy work is to do the bidding of the

Master, even thy body and thy soul are not thy own. What fever of self-interest is this that excites thee, and makes thy spirit unquiet? O thou servant of GOD, do not think of taking back all that thou hast vowed to surrender unto the service of the Most High, do not claim to be someone on thine own account, do not seek to preserve thy place or thy interest in the blind competitions of the worldly-minded. Let thy renunciation make thee joyful, free. Thy place is not here, thy friends are beings in the better world, thy kinsmen are the devout and the spiritually-minded. Do not be restless, if the children of the world give thee no recognition or count thee as of little value. If the Eternal has revealed Himself to thee and if His purposes are outlined in thy souls' eye-sight, that suffices for thee; follow the Spirit's foot-prints, wherever thou mayst be led; and though it will sometimes hurt thy sense of what is right, try to remember GOD is never far from His faithful, and no real harm can befall thee at any time. Torment thyself, therefore, no longer, do not brood over thy circumstances or thy troubles or thy defeats or

thy dangers or thy achievements or thy successes. But in utter self-abandonment and dispassion find thy true self again and again, realise thy destiny, and do thy work in every new combination of events. Fear not, worry not, faint not, be not anxious about what men think of thee; only be careful to keep a pure conscience, a loving heart, and a ready will to give glory unto GOD. Strive to be worthy of thy calling through faith. True peace always attends upon true dependence on GOD; dependence is the sure result of the love of GOD. Whenever thy soul is unquiet or thy fears and suspicions are aroused, know that something is wrong with thee somewhere in thyself. Pray for the wonderful assurance that the Eternal loves thee, that His graciousness encompasses thee, that His power is greater than the enmity of the whole world, and that it is far better to suffer in the service of GOD than to rule in the abodes of falsehood and darkness.

On the Gift of Life.

MY son, let us praise and thank the Lord with fervent hearts for this wonderful gift of life with its hundredfold blessings, for the light of the earth and the heavens, for all that it reveals, for all that it illumines and for all that it suggests. Gracious is the Lord, like unto a father, more than a father, to all his creatures; and his love is beyond thinking. My son, let us never be weary of praising and worshipping our GOD. Fain would I abide in the glory and sweetness of His presence in the calmness of the morning-time, in the broadness of the bright day, in the ripe lustre of the sunset, and the stillness of the night. Fain, indeed, would we thus abide; but, my son, the weaknesses of the body are often in the way, the interruptions of the world cannot be overcome, and a hundred things of circumstance stand between Him and us. I need, therefore, to look up to the mansions where there is a fuller communion and fewer interruptions, and the im-

pulses of the spirit flow in never-ceasing tides. Those mansions are above and beyond, as surely as yon quenchless lights of the stars that hang out from the heavens night and day, though we see them not or but seldom. It were best we should look up and think and prepare and make sure and try to live beyond this life. In strength and health and the days of well-doing, this would be profitable; but in seasons of despondency and the encompassing darkness of the end, it is not only a benefit but a great craving. My son, school thyself to live and think beyond this thy present life, for good and gracious as it is, its realities are deeply shadowed with vanity and its lights are soon put out by recurring darknesses which no man may penetrate. Cruel and everlasting separations sit at the very threshold of its dearest loves, and even duties and sacrifices have their deadly weariness. Nothing avails, nothing avails, but the sense of oneness with the Spirit of GOD—the consciousness of standing in the very Presence which enfolds the sorrowing aspiring soul in its many infirmities. Yes, indeed, I have known much of such blessed-

ness even in this life, the thought of which is pleasant; but it is not enough, not at all enough. My whole soul thirsteth after the communion of the living GOD, to be one with Him, to abide in and with Him, for ever. Art thou, my son, of the same mind with me in this matter? If so, hasten to finish thy work here on earth, remember thine is a narrowing limit of time, thine is a closing lease of life, remember thy shortcomings are many and grievous, that thou art but very little, that GOD is great, and thou art to be judged by Him. Stand before Him to-day, O my soul, as thou wouldst on the last great day, because the day of thy judgment hath already dawned upon thee. Be not too fondly attached to the world which thou must leave, grieve not too bitterly for the things which have been denied thee, grieve not too much for the one or two great sorrows thou hast met, grieve not for the renunciation which all men and thou also must make. Let me assure thee that whatever is pure and good in this world hath its counterpart, its fulness, hereafter; and what now seems unjust hath somewhere its remedy. And as for what is con-

trary to GOD and goodness, let it perish with thee, let its very thought perish! Joyful indeed is this life when thou canst bless it, use it and spend everyday of it as a preparation for the pure existence that spreads on the other shore of death. As the oceans cast their coolness and fragrance many, many miles before you touch their waters and the sweet influences of the day are breathed by the early riser long before the dawn has broken on the blue sky, so the freshness of life immortal and uncarnal pervades the last stages of our long pilgrimage, if we hold on to our GOD in the pain and weariness of parting. Joyful, indeed, is life if, while thou still hast it, thou canst forsake its hatreds, put out its passions, outlive its lusts and abide in the love, goodness and holiness which surely make thine inheritance here as the son of GOD. O my son, behold the hour is late, the night is far spent, and thou hast still a long way to go; be not detained by these vain apparitions. Retire as quickly as thou mayst from all this evil desire, evil example, useless conflicts, false hopes and clinging attachments of personal and party interest.

Be kind and good to all men according to thy measure, but have nothing to do with the poor wretched vanities of the world. Mix with all men, if they need thy help in word or deed in their good work; but be not bound to them for thy own interest or for thy expectations; let thy triumph and thy joy and thy strength and thy consolation be hidden in thy communion with thy GOD. Once for all let me remind thee, O my son, thou hast depended too much upon men's good opinion, and their disesteem and disdain have darkened thy vision of the blessed Spirit of GOD. Is not this too gross an attachment to what is vain; is not this worldly-mindedness; is not this the slavery of man? Thou knowest what the praises of men are made of, thou knowest the value of their blame, and thou knowest fairly well the joy, treasure and strength of standing pure in the sight of GOD within thine own conscience. Thou knowest the secret history of persecutions, martyrdoms, cruelties, unpopuliarities and the boasted combinations of men, to intrigue and defeat the purposes of GOD. Why then art thou so anxious to be with the majority and to

have thy reward in this world? How often have its fashions changed and then passed away ; how often have its idols been overthrown, and its heroes licked the dust of their own worshippers' feet ! Be not like one of these. Rather count thyself blessed when men hate thee, persecute thee and say all manner of things against thee without a cause. Let thy hopes of peace lie on a secure foundation, in the sense of oneness with the blessed spirits who suffered more than thou ever shalt and have gone unrewarded and unaccepted. Yet think of the abundance of their reward now. Great was their labor, greater is their peace ! Sow thou, then, the immortal seed where thou hast toiled and ploughed ; look not to the weariness that is behind ; water the seed that thou hast sown ; let thy hand know no idleness, for this drought shall last long ; let thy harvests lie in the future, thy satisfaction be stored for thee in a better state of things where injustice shall be no more and envy shall be no more and love shall meet with love.

On the Dignity of Character.

MY son, have dignity in thy religious life ; let men feel some respect when they approach thee ; let libertines be afraid in thy presence ; let them feel that the strength of the Lord rests in thee and it is to be respected and feared. Humility is not a mean thing, it does not grovel or sob or whine or speak with a mealy mouth. It does not yield to everything, it is not inconsistent with burning indignation at falsehood and wrong. Piety is not always softness and sweetness ; it is sometimes hard, fierce and stern, unsparing in its denunciation against the enemies of GOD and righteousness. When this unyielding resistance to evil is mingled with the gentleness and loftiness of spiritual repose, then the two things make that noble dignity of life which is the sure test of the man of GOD. Moral sternness is not violence, nor is indignation against falsehood to be mistaken with that cursing and abuse which some so-called religious men administer

unto all who are not of the same mind as themselves. There is a hollow affectation of strength in foolish preachers whose disguised self-interest blinds them to the rights of other men to decent treatment. Pharisees of all religions are perpetually denouncing and damning; never be one of them. I warn thee against the fatal lassitude of the Hindu character which imagines all religious life to lie in mere harmlessness and retirement and submission to everything that happens, be it good or bad.

Learn to know when submission is a virtue, when it is a vice, and act accordingly. When thy personal interests are assailed, thy private honor or position is threatened, when as an individual thou art insulted and defied, expelled and ignored, then if thou canst, be silent as Christ was silent before the false judge, or Buddha amidst the clamours of wrangling Brahmins. That very silence was stern and awful. But when the interests of truth that are placed in thy keeping, when public morals and the fair name of religion, are endangered by the machinations of intriguers and emissaries of evil, then it is lawful, nay dutiful, to stand up and firmly resist the

wrong-doing. Any admixture of injustice or selfish grudge mars the effect of thy protest and makes the issue of the fight uncertain. Then it degenerates into a personal quarrel, and that is never dignified. But when the love of truth is unmixed and uppermost, and a passion for righteousness compels thee to sacrifice thy quiet for the children of GOD, then the providence of GOD fights on thy side, and the peace and quietness sacrificed bring a deeper measure of peace. In any case the purposes of GOD are of more importance than thy own comfort and safety, and when thou dost feel that the Master wants thee to speak trumpet-tongued against wickedness and for truth, it is a cowardly thing to seek thy ease and be silent. A man of GOD is a man of force. Spiritual calmness has always an understanding of strength at its bottom. It is never safe to provoke a man who communes with GOD, because the sympathies of all good men run in the same channel with his impulses. There is no knowing what a man of spirit will do or not do when he hears the commandant of GOD. What means it, then, my son, that thou art ever quiescent,

ever intent upon being all things to all men, when untruth and impiety run rampant and ravage like wolves the folds of the beloved of GOD? "As much as possible be at peace with all men," says the Apostle. But in spite of all thy mildness if an "offence come out of truth, it is better that the truth be spoken than the offence spared." The most peaceful of men have been the most persecuted of men, and their words as well as their silences have provoked more anger than the clamours of the vulgar. If they were silent and reserved oftentimes, it was not because they feared the generation of wrong-doers; if they sometimes called down woe upon the heads of the hypocrites, it was not because they were wrathful on account of personal injury. These are only phases of the service and worship of GOD. All the elements of human nature, its passions as well as its peace, are to be made use of to serve Him; then, indeed, has a man the right to genuine honor and dignity in GOD'S kingdom.

Self-consecration.

MY son, give thyself wholly to thy GOD. Save nothing, reserve nothing, have no fear or care, make no provision. The Spirit calls thee to do thy life's work. Stay not to look behind. Be like a man, be ready at all moments to do what is wanted of thee. Thou hast often felt in thy best moods that thou art a consecrated man, felt that thou art in touch with and responsive to the spirit of GOD, but not always. Beware, an hour's carelessness has been known to undo the struggle and labour of the whole day, of many days. No one knows when the call of GOD comes, when the sacred bell in GOD'S great temple sounds; and if thou fallest asleep, the angel of thy destiny may come and return without delivering the great message. Thou shalt not sit idle, nor needst thou be singing psalms and offering prayers all day. But thou shouldst always be found at the post of godly duty, working or thinking, praying or

serving, or resting on the bosom of thy Father—always the same man, the son, the servant, the faithful devotee of GOD. A materialist now, a secularist then, a devotee at another hour, changing with every tide of circumstance, with every passing influence of the moment—that is what most religious men of these times are. Changeless, constant, faithful to all duties, ever ready to obey are the elect of GOD. Be heedful of what thou art inclined to do, lest thy inclinations take thee away from thy GOD. Thou canst not afford to suffer that, whatever else thou mayst suffer. It sometimes happens that in the holiest service a man may wander far and lose the consciousness of the Indwelling Spirit; but this temporary distance is only a new trial to overcome and serves in the end to bring him nearer to the Presence than he ever was. All self-consciousness is apt to be harmful, even the consciousness of being one with GOD. All self-forgetfulness is apt to be beneficial, even if sometimes thou lovest the sense whether thou art near or far from thy GOD. For it may so turn out that, when thou thinkest thou art with Him, thou art far and when thou

thinkest thou art far and forsaken, His invisible Spirit encompasses thee. A sentimental blissfulness is not the end of self-consecration or a morbid sense of self-righteousness, but a manly integrity which in work and worship, in labour and rest, is regardless of self and is one with GOD. And this comes from willingness to give thy whole time and thy whole strength to the great Master. Do not serve Heaven to please the Earth; do not make thy religion a professional thing. Thou shalt often find thy highest moods undervalued and thy lower moods praised by the looker-on. He has his measures and rules to judge holy life by; but GOD above is thy only Judge. Be judged by the great Knower of secrets who is never far from thy soul; and if thou hast peace of conscience before that judgment-seat, it is all thou needst. It is not one kind of act or one kind of worship that the devoted servant delights in; but as many various conditions of life there may be, thou shalt glorify thy GOD in them all. Never fear to be joyous if Heaven brings thee joy, and let thy prosperity be a testimony of thy faithful accepted service. There is more genuine

consecration in grateful joy than in all the sorry faces that pietists put on. But if affliction be thy assigned lot, let thy spirit shine in its gloom like the evening star. Distrust not the innocent pleasures of life, when they come to thee unsought in the course of thy pilgrimage; refresh thyself in the midst of the Father's bounties; rest that thou mightst labour with all the greater zeal. Only know this, none excels in any kind of great service but he who has put his whole soul into it. My son, thou hast before thee the august personality of GOD to cheer and lead thee on; thou hast not the misery of falling back upon thyself or upon foolish men for thy consolation. Thy great Master shares in thy work and promiseth thee an endless variety of conditions and rewards. Therefore, rejoice with thy whole heart in the vow of self-consecration thou hast made, work with a brave and cheerful spirit and, when thy time comes, enter into the glory of GOD's children.

On Inconstant Vows.

THY great vows, my son, were taken when the weather was fair, when the sun mildly shone on the mountain tops and the breezes blew balm from the south. Then thy spirit was stirred within thee, and then before the Glorious Presence thou didst take the great resolution of devoting thyself to the service of the holy GOD. From the pure deep heavens promises rained upon thee like holy flowers in sandal, the earth seemed to hold in store for thee a multitude of blessings, and grateful men offered to thee a welcome wherever thou didst want to go with thy message. That is a hallowed memory and the ground whereon thou trod was sacred ground. But, my son, inconstant was that fine weather and the sunset ended in chilling mists ; the prospect changed into an utter blank, and every point of beauty, every greenness of nature, was wiped out as if for ever. Then thy inconstant spirit changed also, thy vows seemed unsubstantial, un-

real and distant, thy resolutions seemed impossible, alas! even thy GOD seemed to be an uncertain existence. Then, alas, O my beloved, thou didst cease to be the faithful son of GOD, the chosen servant who was always willing and ready. Such reactions have often mastered thee, unfixed thee from the central objects of thy life, marred in thee the image of GOD, and sickened thy greatest and holiest resolutions with the pallor and weakness of death. Hence^r thy religious life has not been a steady growth upwards, but an irregular development showing the unremedied inconstancies of thy frail nature. Hence the light of the All-holy has not been a ceaseless revelation to thee, but a fitful glare that depends upon thy momentary moods and surroundings. What is still more sad, thou, O misguided one, hast taken counsel of the gloom and despondency of thy soul, rather than of the impulses of light and inspiration in thee sent to cheer thy spirits in this changeful world. Yea, when thy own heart misgave thee, the whole world was full of misgiving; when thy own spirit helped thee not, but withdrew into the hidden depths, no promise

came to thee from above or beyond or anywhere, all things seemed blank and irresponsive, and thou wert like an orphan wandering up and down in a land of strangers, disowned and unknown ! My son, bethink thee of those other souls whose vows of life were unaltered amidst storm, thunder, darkness, blindness and the tremblings of fear. They had long taken leave of fine weather and fair prospects, of the favours and promises of men ; no strains of sacred music responded to their impulses, and the Spirit of the Lord visited them and overpowered them with terror. Then they uttered the word of self-consecration which nothing could revoke again. My beloved son, the seasons of sickness, danger, desertion, loneliness and the desolating crushing separations of death are often the chosen seed-times when the veiled Spirit sows in his spiritual kingdom. Sleep not, but watch thou in those dark solitary hours ; and if the mood comes to thee, take thou thy irrevocable vow before the presence and altar of the Almighty. Knowst thou not that all darkness is only for a while, and that light is for ever, because GOD is light ? Or dost thou forge

that after the night's storm and terror the morning comes with the banners of glory and the triumphant notes in field and forest? Knowst thou not, all disturbances in nature are to purge off unwholesome influences, and every disorder tends to restore the harmony of things? Why, then, art thou cast down, O poor man, why does thy voice falter in repeating the solemn words which are never absent from thy heart? Why dost thou imagine that thy GOD hath forsaken thee or that His children have become thine enemies? It is thou who, in thy inconstancy, hast forsaken them; it is thou who art lost in the gloom which thy own heart hath created. Yet I am loath to lay the blame on thee. The sorrows and trials of men are appointed for them, not wholly self-inflicted. And if light follows darkness, darkness must follow light. The mariner in the deep seas, sailing with wind and tide, must look out for the storm-cloud which is not far from the horizon; and the Son of Man, though He is like a bridegroom to-day, must be ready for His humiliation to-morrow. What then art thou to do when all fairness and favourable opportunity, all promise and prospect,

are vanished? Sternly keep the laws of spiritual life laid down for thee in better times, when GOD was present and sympathetic and thy vows and prayers were graciously received. Learn to labour sometimes without response or impulse. Let every hour complete its appointed work, and every day its hard duty. Then greater responses and higher impulses would sometimes come than thou ever knowst. Learn to suffer sometimes in the course of thy service without appreciation and reward from GOD or man, nay in spite of thy own misgivings and distrusts. Then such reward and appreciation would come in due season both from GOD and man as thou didst never look for. Possess thy soul in patience and inward strength at the hour of fear and darkness. Cast thyself on thy prayers in moments of great need, O my son, pray without ceasing. It is an arduous task thou hast proposed to thyself, it is a great and solemn vow thou hast taken. It is a sore and terrible struggle to overcome thy passions. It is a stern and never-ending fight to overcome the dullness and wickedness of thine own or any other man's self-will. And the

hardest thing of all is to attain the calmness and peace of GOD. Every day the shadows of old age and death become longer and nearer; and who knows when the darkness will close around thee? Thou knowst thou hast to die whether with GOD or without His grace. Were it then not better far for thee to remember every day the vows of love and faithful service to which thy life was consecrated and, whether it is better or worse with thee, to hold on to thy appointed course till thy pilgrimage be ended and thy work be accomplished?

Duty in Time of Trouble—I.

INDEED thy lot is cast in evil times, O my son : I must look upon thee to be faithful unto the great covenant which the spirit of the Lord hath made with this land and people, in order that they might be saved and be raised to show an example unto other nations. Grieve not too bitterly that thou art not helped or followed or appreciated or even understood. My son, lay not thy affliction to heart too much, at least thou mayst count upon One. Also I am thy friend ; and with all the foresight wherewith love is gifted, I promise thee that the day is not far when thy struggles shall meet with their reward, thy secret prayers shall be answered before all men, and truth and righteousness flourish in thy hands as the young bay tree. But in the meanwhile be incessant in worship, in aspiration, in trust, in struggles after purity of character, and, above everything else, in obedience unto the silent impulses of the Spirit of GOD who breathes within

thee. Institutions are crumbling, men are falling right and left, great principles are being forsaken, under the guise of religious and moral motive those who ought to be the guides of GOD'S household are saying things and showing examples which only add gloom to gloom and vanity to vanity. All men seem to be going astray, their whole head is sick, their whole heart is faint. In the midst of this darkness and degradation, O my son, let me solemnly charge thee that the Great Master above and the great world around look to thee to be true to thy vow. Do not forsake, do not dishonor, do not lower, do not undervalue, the holy cause which the Lord hath entrusted to thy keeping, because others have proved false. That has made thee what thou art, O son of GOD; there is no knowing what thy Father will yet make of thee if thou dost decide to spend thyself to give Him glory. Know that it will be unto GOD'S glory if in thy secret soul thou dost always strive to conform' to the lofty standard of holy life which He hath revealed in thee and established before all the world in the lives of men whom thou hast accepted as thy models and

masters. It will be unto GOD'S glory if thou dost put thy whole trust in the great truths which have visited thee in the midst of thy devout moods, while in communion with man or with nature or with GOD. If thou dost struggle without ceasing to make those truths realities of thine life, it will be unto GOD'S glory. It will be unto GOD'S glory, if those impulses of peace, goodwill and affection that swell within thy soul unbidden, in the presence of GOD, should shape thy conduct and thy attitudes and thy manners towards all men, those who are kind to thee and sympathetic as well as those who are not. Let not hatred at any time move thy hatred, nor anger kindle thy wrath, nor injustice shake the calmness of thy self-possession. Hide thyself in the depths of the august Spirit who bears all, forgives all, knows all, loves all, judges all and repays all. He never hurries nor is impatient, is never excited nor in a passion to do what must be done to preserve the harmonies of truth and righteousness. In most apparent things the Lord of the universe submits to the will of weak, even of wicked, men, and these seem to have the upperhand in the

world's affairs, so that our faith is often shaken in the triumph of truth and justice.

But woe unto the men who dare to take advantage of divine long suffering and persist in their evil course. For retribution is not far behind them at any time; and when they are least prepared the angel of GOD'S justice will overtake them, and they shall reap as they have sown. My son, do not, therefore, be too eager to resist wrong, nay sometimes consent to submit to it. Though thou mayst never hide the light that is in thee through motives of interest or indolence, yet thou art to submit to the wrong-doer and despoiler sometimes, as thou wouldst to the highwayman and the pirate, not through fear, but through prudence. It is doubtless unto GOD'S glory if thou dost suffer every humiliation to keep thy conscience untainted amidst the thousand temptations through which thou must pass in thy heavenward course, for man's innermost holiness makes the only test of accepted service before the Lord. Unmixed faithfulness unto the Spirit of GOD in pure life, in tried love, in true wisdom, is the great law to be remembered and kept

in these troublous times. Well, mayst thou prepare thyself that this thy fidelity in these difficult times will not be seen or recognised by men in their darkened minds. Learn to live and work and die unrecognised; this is not the first time thou art doing so in the world. But of this rest will assured that the providence of GOD is neither weak nor weary to keep those who are unbefriended in their lonely work of carrying out the Divine purpose, that to-morrow will right the wrongs of to-day, and the faithful will in joy and glory enter into the mansions where they are fit to dwell for ever.

Duty in Time of Trouble—II.

MY son, pleasure and pain are feelings in a man's own mind ; what is pleasant to one is painful to another, what is painful to one is pleasant to another. Anything like universal pain there is not and never was. Nevertheless, there are things which cannot but be felt as sad or inconvenient or unfortunate by each man according to his nature. What to do with them is the question. Face the problem of pain without flinching, and solve it by enduring it quietly. Everyone has to take his share of trouble in life, some have more, some have less ; but everyone is not quiet or content under it, and few choose to learn from it what they might. If thou hast begun to learn that lesson so late in life, master it as soon as thou canst by constant practice. For there is no knowing when the day may come, and thou shalt be called upon to prove thy loyalty and faith in GOD. Put thyself, therefore, early under the discipline of accepting pain

as a necessary part of life ; so that when the severest strain upon thy endurance comes, thou mayst not turn out a worldly-minded unbeliever. Learn to be very quiet under suffering, have a moral love for it ; and if thou carest not to court it as some do, at least take it as often as it comes as a special opportunity to purify thyself. It is not natural to like pain for its own sake ; for then a man is apt to boast of his distinction over other men, as if laying Heaven under a special obligation. But, indeed, thou shouldst welcome suffering, whenever it comes of itself for the sake of mortifying thy self-esteem and worldly-mindedness, for the sake of realising what life means, and for the sake of serving the Lord according to His purpose, and not thy own. I repeat, the endurance of suffering cannot be the object of a man's life ; and those who make a show of it, oftentimes degrade themselves and others. Do not curse GOD, or curse man or the climate or the event or thyself. Whenever misery in any shape presents itself at thy doors, whether as ill-health or bereavement or indigence or persecution, take every means to overcome it, but know thou canst

not remove it entirely. A part of it shall always remain to afflict thy soul; and the only way to keep the peace of thy mind is cheerful endurance and submissive dutifulness. For though thy spirit may be sorely troubled, my son, forget not that around and above thee there is the beneficent presence of a Parent who cares for thee and loves thee. Do what thou mayst, He will shape thy life according to what in His sight is best for thee here and hereafter. Neglect not, therefore, to do thy duty in the season of depression and, with a mind wholly resigned, to trust in GOD to give thee the needed grace. Partly, indeed, as the reward of endurance, and partly also as free unforced grace, the Father does shed on the spirit of the faithful that calmness and sweetness of peace which the afflicted have known. All things borne in the right spirit go to make a man's inward peace. But the right spirit comes when a man suffers because of bearing love unto GOD. Pain becomes pleasure when it is caused by the impulse of love; and thus it is overcome, nay, not only ordinary pain, but disease, disgrace, even death itself. My son, lovest thou

the Lord? Then thou canst bear everything for His sake. Yet one word more before we part. Sorrow comes to man from a twofold source. It is either the result of his misdeed, or the result of his holiness. Remember thou the two thieves who were nailed on two sides by the cross of the Son of GOD? They suffered because they were wicked; He suffered because He was holy. The misery which comes from ill-doing becomes an atonement if it is accompanied by penitence and faith. But suffering which is the result of love and loyalty, is no reproach but the glory of manhood. Men who are sent, called, and blessed by GOD must suffer at the hands of those who have foolishly made themselves GOD's enemies. Affliction has been the lot of good men at all times, and shall be. But they have the honor and peace of doing what no other can do; they make pain the most sacred thing, they teach how to overcome it, not only pain but the dissolution of all the world, the terror of death itself.

On Godly Solitude.

MY son, art thou completely alone with thy GOD? Art thou without friend, helper, sympathiser to co-work with thee, without any one whom thou mightst count as on thy side in the daily battle of life, none other to befriend thee but the Spirit of GOD? Art thou really hard pressed, forced by thy conscience to an unequal fight, all the seeming facts and arrangements of the world against thee, all except some mysterious voice, deep within thy soul, calling upon thee to put thy trust in the Lord? Then, indeed, put thy faith in thy GOD more than thou ever didst before. And in every the most minute detail of thy conduct, act faithfully to thy conscience. If this be thy condition, I advise thee to remember that no man ever mastered the secret of trust in GOD, except he who for a while was entirely alone with Him—yea, even seemingly without Him. The ancient *muni* abode in the wilderness, silent as the rock on which he sat, alone with the

Alone. Alone did Moses climb the dreaded heights of Sinai to know Jehovah's mind, while the forty thousand Israelites clamoured at the foot of the mountain. On the banks of the Niranjana, Gautama sat alone for six years seeking the light which took long in coming. Jesus was alone forty days in the wilderness wrestling with the tempter. And thou, my son, shalt have to consent to be alone in this howling wilderness of men in the city, seeking and studying the purposes of the Eternal. Learn to keep thy counsel patiently, and follow thy GOD. Fain wouldst thou turn the hearts of men all at once towards GOD and his dispensation. Fain wouldst thou convert thine enemies and encourage thy friends by explaining all things, resolving every doubt, and answering every objection. But it shall not be. They will turn a deaf ear to thee. Thy self-humiliations will be suspected, thy virtues will be contemned, and even thy prayers will be an abomination to the righteous and the unrighteous alike. Turn thy face to GOD alone, and utter thy cry. He will take long to answer thee, and sometimes it will seem as if He is never going

to have any dealings with thee at all. But thou shalt have to learn the hard lesson of trust in GOD to learn it not by hearsay, but at first hand, learn it only as He the Great Teacher can teach, and none other. He teacheth not but in still accent when the learner is perfectly alone. And this solitude is sent in grace by Him: it does not come to every one, because every one does not need it. As a preliminary discipline it comes to him who bears the mark of his great mission on his brow. Envy not those, therefore, who have numerous banders themselves, in evil counsel, to wage the fight of falsehood; do not covet the clamorous delusions of those who are minded after the world. They call after the name of GOD but want to establish themselves. Flee far where the hand of the Almighty drives thee, and there learn the secrets of oneness with GOD. Pines not that the city is unpeopled to thee, and the sanctuary is empty, that thy days are solitary like the night, and thy nights have the desolation of the grave. But know the Spirit of the Lord^u is never^u far from thee wherever thou mayst happen to be. Thou soughtest Him in the

morning, but in the evening thou wert forgetful, thou wert present with Him at the time of prayer, but in the night-time thou didst droop and despair as if there was no GOD. O thou who art alone, absent thee not at any time from the nearness of the Lord and His consolations.

On the Spirit's Moods.

MY son, if thou wert only able to be the same man in all moods of thy mind, thou wouldst indeed be the Son of GOD. But thy changefulness is thy crying sin, and thy many moods are the source of all thy weakness. The saints of the world were not different from thee in kind nor often higher in impulse or motive; but they were very different in this that they retained their spiritual identity at all times, which thou canst not. They did not become good and bad alternately, now worldly-minded now heavenly-minded, now lowly and self-sacrificing, anon proud in spirit and unjust to others' rights. Whether the level of their religious life was very high or not, that level they always struggled to keep. But thou, my son, hast lost the confidence and support of men as being unreliable on account of thy never-ending changefulness. They know not whether to take thee as a religious or a worldly man. Nor is that

thy only trouble. Thou hast lost or art going to lose a great deal of thy own natural power by not steadily using it for one end. For power like wealth always increases by the wisdom of use; while it rusts, deteriorates and becomes unprofitable by lying in a heap in idleness. For if thou art one thing at one time and another thing at another time, the two things negative each other, thou art not able to become strong in either. Thou shinest neither as a religious man, nor as a worldly man, and art not successful in anything. All things thou canst not hope to do equally well; therefore, bend thy power to do one thing to perfection. Perfection is the effect of constant effort, great painstaking and the consecration of all life. Be always ready at thy post with pure motive, sincere impulse and unsparing energy, the same to-day, to-morrow and for ever. My son, thou busiest thyself with too many objects so that the main object is often taken away from thy sight, and along with it thy highest nature also. Thou canst not find thy ownself, how can others find thee? And whatever turns uppermost in thy distracted mind thou dost

seize that, thus wasting time, force, life—everything that is useful. Let me assure thee that a man of GOD is a man of unchanging fidelity, and the test of that lies in his habitual conduct. What dost thou labour for, O thou busy body ; why wander from place to place, from pursuit to pursuit, from thought to thought ? What gatherest thou, what wisdom, what righteousness ; whither is thy course ? Thou heedest not, nor waitest to be told. But I see everything : Led by the blind life-force in thee that would give thee no rest, thou goest about, O man, thou dost run in all directions, right as well as wrong, often wavering, repenting and trying in vain to retrace thy steps. Thus with all thy trouble very little indeed is the measure of thy spiritual progress. Know once for all that life is vain, that the world is vain, that even its goodness and religiousness are often but fleeting appearances. Know that the one real thing is nearness to the eternal Reality, and everlasting life is always identified with life in the everlasting GOD. In the morning time, before the mists have darkened thy vision, contemplate on GOD, and see if thou standest at His side. In the evening time

before the deathlike heaviness, of sleep hath fallen on thy senses, seek to find that the blessing and grace of GOD rest with thee. And when in the heat and dust of the day, weariness and uneasiness vex thy soul, be sure that all this is indispensable in the course of the great calling. The acts of a man are like angel's wings to his spirit, or like bars of iron to his prison. If thy acts are unceasingly for GOD'S glory, and the fulfilment of life's great vow, these acts are even greater than thy devotions; for while the incense of thy sanctuary soon loses its warmth and sweetness, the effects of thy character last with thee, and make up thy future. For while thy devotions must necessarily be limited within an hour or two, and may often be wordy and shallow, thy work lies deep in thy whole being, and makes thee either the friend of GOD or His enemy. For the holiest passions of the heart come and go like heavenly visitants, and sacred thoughts move like winds on the face of the waters. When they are with us we are with GOD, when they are gone we are cold and earthly. But our acts are with us always, and in their righteous succession make the continuity and

the permanent value of life. Yet, my son, I would not have thee believe that works are all in all. Because I know they oftentimes harden the worker's mind, who thinks, because of his keeping always busy, he has a lien upon heaven. Let thy daily good deeds make the true preparation of thy daily devotions, and let thy devotions make the preparation of thy daily good work. Let the natural succession of deeds, devotions, thoughts, and holy exercise of all kinds cure thee of the inconstancy of thy character. Let all this fill up every vacant space of thy life, and give thee thy wholeness of character which in all its details and principles should be full of the Spirit of GOD. For religious life is as many-sided as the nature of man; and until each one of these phases reflects like a mirror the countenance of the divine Indweller, it will reflect earthly or selfish things. And he who is intense in his devotions but not godly in his conduct, deceives himself. For life is not made of prayers and hymns only; it has its many distractions and disharmonies which in most cases make up the larger part of its intervals. When all these many intervals have

found their occupation in the thought and in the service of the Great Master, each fitting up with each, then indeed thy life makes a holy tabernacle wherein the Lord dwells in life, in death and evermore.

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Rest and Quiet.

MY son, Rest and Quiet, either in the communion or in the service of GOD, do not always belong to His servants, but they must be at times sorely tried and tossed, losing their tranquillity and even their sense of the Father's presence. The wealth of the spirit is to be acquired by yielding thyself to the dealings of GOD, and these thou must not expect to be uniformly as thou dost wish. Nay, remember in thy life's struggles thou hast to strive not only with Providence but with the wills and interests of other men whose love for thee is small, and who are heedless whether thou dost suffer or rejoice. In this double fight, my son, thou must often feel thyself hard pressed and all thy strength almost taken away from thee. But let me at once tell thee that such weariness and helplessness, though they may seem to be the very touch of the very sting of death, are appointed from above. For through such deadly fear and desolation the child of GOD shall move in his onward pilgrimage, and such

pressure beyond a man's strength is the inevitable process of the law of attaining the blessedness of godly patience and strength. For the peace of this world's rest and ease is the price that has to be paid for the peace that is beyond the world, and that heavenly peace when it comes is enough compensation for life's many troubles. Hold thyself in readiness, whoever thou art, to voyage into the unknown where risks, troubles, and responsibilities of all kinds dwell, with steady trust in the Father's purposes, with unflinching reliance upon His love and companionship. Everything on earth is a vanity; only the life in GOD that ever grows and moves forward is real, and what men call religion perishes as other earthly things do perish, if it will not continually point the upward way and unfold the ever-rising summits of the holy hill of GOD. Thou must, therefore, gird up thy soul for storms and stress, for trouble and danger, for the loss of thy calmness and self-possession, that thou mayst be possessed by the Spirit of GOD. Fain wouldst thou lie contented with what thou hast known of GOD and mix the perishable and imperishable

in thy draught of selfish ease. But the hand of the great Chastener will not suffer thee. He will ennoble and purify thee, and make the good in thee continually better. Fain wouldst thou measure thy service to the limits of thy purpose and power, but the great Master will not suffer thee to dwindle into the smallness of thy ways; He will make thy work as great as thy ideal, and teach thee experiences of which thou hast no idea now. For GOD is great, His purpose and power are equally great; thou art His son, and He will put thy endeavours into things which shall be done in His might, not in thine own. Place thyself in His hands then, and let it be unto thee as He wills. True enough indeed it is that this sea of circumstances through which thy long voyage lies is beyond thy ken and control. Thou art small, the world around thee is great; thou art one, and thine enemies are many. It is, alas, very true that the tides amidst which thy bark is cast are turbulent and the bark itself is frail and failing. It is true, misfortune has overtaken many of thy fellow pilgrims, and there is such a thing as death whose shadow deepens as it draws near to

thee. And at times thou canst not but feel despondent and tired. But such despondency and helplessness, if thou art steady in thy looking up, will be very soon converted into the greater stimulus for faith and farther vision of immortality in the course of time, and that will surely exalt thee and add to the sum of thy soul. Only have the bravery to control thyself, have the mind and the love to trust and pray, and my son, have the manliness not to offend the holy laws of GOD ; and then I promise and declare that the infinite grace of Him who is never absent from thee, though thou mayst stray far, will rule the winds and waves for thee and bring thy long voyage to the peaceful harbour.

Devout Loneliness.

MY son, hast thou known what it is to cast thyself into the hands of GOD? Hast thou felt the loneliness and isolation of having no other friend, helper or refuge but GOD'S providence? It still seems to me, thou dost retain much of the charge of thy life in thy own hands, casting about for sympathy which never comes, and by carefulness and shrewdness guardest thy life of its natural consequence. Indeed I allow that thou art a man of prayer, and hast some faith in the leadings of the Indwelling Spirit, and also perhaps that thou keepest aloof from conscious falsehood and unrighteousness. Aye, thou canst not deny that even in this thou failest often, and thy conscience smites thee for recurring impulses of weakness and wickedness. Tell me, O my son, why this inner taint of sin doth stick to thy soul, why this grinding sense of pitiful unworthiness weighs thee down even in the midst of thy highest moods? If thou canst not

answer me, I will answer thee. I will tell thee, thou hast not fully committed thy spirit into the hands of the Almighty Saviour, thou hast not fully accepted His purpose, nor submitted in the meekness of trust to the unknown will of the Eternal. For know thou always that GOD'S purpose is very unlike thine own purpose, GOD'S will is strange in its unlikeness to thy will, and the laws and dispensations of the Almighty are fixed and sure and stern. He is terrible in His holiness, He is alone in His glory, though He be loving and good. He cannot change; everything in Him and everything He does is most sure, most real, most abiding. Whereas thou, O man, art always changing from side to side, from bad to good, from good to bad, thou art seldom sure of anything, and livest in a half-delusion and half-hope that the Infinite will gainsay and forsake His own ways for thy special behoof of worldly interest! Poor feeble mortal, when wilt thou learn to esteem thyself as an atom of dust, as the merest nothing of nothing in the gigantic scales wherein the Almighty doth weigh the destinies of the universe? When wilt thou learn that the only wisdom

of which thou art capable is to offer thyself and everything thou callest thine, as a willing tribute to the majesty of the most glorious and most supreme purpose of GOD? Ask thou nothing in return for thy surrender, let thy completest submission bring forth its own fruit, whether that be a greater agony of self-humiliation, a greater desertion and loneliness, or the unspeakable peace of rest and strength in the spirit of GOD. It is enough thou hast been called and allowed to give thyself to GOD. Oftentimes, perhaps, thou feelest a sort of vacancy as thou dost realise that no more is the issue of thy life left in thy own hands, thou feelest a helplessness as if some one that used to abide in thee and protect thee has gone away, as if the whole world has gone away from thee. Yes, when thine own self is called out of thee, there is a momentary vacancy. When that old self-sufficept mind of thine is subdued and crushed, the world seems to forsake thee. Whether the world forsaketh thee or thou the world I do not know, but undoubtedly there is a great consciousness of separation from all things and all men. My son, this is the lawful effect of thy own doing.

For whoso consenteth to make a small offering of himself at the altar of the Most High, it is taken as a great sacrifice, and the reward of such sacrifice is freely given unto him; and no reward is greater than that a man's heavy burden of self-protection be taken from his own back, and that he should feel the spirit of the Almighty hath entered into him. Feel thyself a free man, because thou art the chosen man of GOD. Feel thyself a strong man, because the force of the purpose of GOD hath made thee its instrument. What, O my soul, if the agony of thy self-surrender tear thee from house, home and society, what if all men misunderstand thee, listen not to thy explanations, and look upon thee as an outcast? Thy comfort is not the most precious part of thee: the loss of interest which one's worldly life suffers is oftentimes, nay always, a gain to the man of faith. Without caste or home or friend here on earth, thy name is enrolled with those who suffered solitude like thee but conquered the flesh and the world. Therefore, cast thyself as a willing victim upon the great purpose of GOD more than thou ever didst before, be not impatient,

be not afraid, be not ill-tempered at thy loss, loneliness and pain. All life and all pleasure is vain, only the purposes of the Spirit of GOD are everlasting. The sympathy and the kindness of men are sweet but unstable, thou knowst not how soon and how unconsciously thou mayst offend thy friends; and then, if thou buildest much hope upon the permanence of their good offices, woe unto thee! Love men, be compassionate to all, honor whom thou canst, and if thou gettest one or two to stand by thee till the end, be contented. But when thou dost realise that the Lord is thy helper and refuge at all times, thine own thoughts become the altar stairs of heaven, they have a treasure in them which thou fain wouldst not lose. My son, only for a little hour is this pain and loneliness, the triumph and the healing are for evermore. Yea, even now, even while in this valley of shadows, behold the Lord and the host of His immortals bear thee company, and strew around thee many flowers of heavenly blessing. Thou art not alone, though thou feelest lonely; thou art not forsaken, though thou feelest cast down. My son,

arise and awake, because thy trials are well-known to heaven and thy tribulations are very near their end. There is a sense of reassuring response for the man who has cast himself on GOD, there is a silent invitation to forsake all anxiety, There is a felt security which scatters all fear. It all comes from something that is very deep within. The Spirit of GOD draws a man nearer and nearer, tells him distinctly what to do, and rescues him from his loneliness to be the light of the world.

Be Thyself.

MY son, have the courage and faith to be true to thy nature. Dost thou believe that the Providence of GOD presides over thy powers and affairs, thy strivings and hopes, so that, though practically thy own master, thou art really *not* thy own master, but a willing or unwilling instrument in the hands of GOD? Thou needst not to be taught that thy nature is a double nature made up of thy body and thy soul, that oftentimes the one gainsays and governs the other, and that by the resolution of thy own will thou canst turn thyself into a spiritual or a carnal man or an incoherent compound of the two, as thou now art. Thine own self, thine own personality, lies in this discrimination and choice between good and evil. All the force, all the machinery, all the impulse in thee, which thou callst thy nature, is neither thine nor thyself, but put in thy hands by the Maker whose handiwork thou art. GOD made "the animal, GOD made the spirit, the lower as well as the higher; and GOD made man after Himself.

Some how or other man has to be like GOD. He moves the forces that govern both body and mind. He helps man or ceases to help him, according as are his preferences, prayers and efforts. Every one's nature is the medium given him, the instruments through which he is to give effect to his resolutions, be they good or bad. But whether they are good or bad, Providence rules man's nature and destiny, and silently compels him to serve the far-off purpose for which he is made and to which he moves. This may take time ; but it is sure to come about in the end. Every man's nature, therefore, is to him a sure indication of what path of life he is to follow, if he is to do what he came for. No one's nature is bad, but in every one it is double ; and the good is sufficiently strong to overcome the bad, if he will only use the good as strenuously as he ought to use it. Great men have a great share of power ; small men have a small share ; but the great and the small have the power to be godly and to be ungodly, each in their own way and in their measure. No one, therefore, need distrust or distort his nature, if he is sure that he has chosen what is after GOD'S

mind. But few have the strength to be true to their nature. Men do not speak well of them if they do, and most men, therefore, imitate their neighbours, and act, not as GOD wishes but as others wish, or as the carnal in them leads them to wish. But thou, my son, learn to behold the great Spirit in thy nature, and have the firmness and insight to follow the Spirit's footsteps. Great teachers and great books cannot make thee what thou art destined to be, they can only lay before thee records and experiences of spiritual life. GOD, the Indweller, the Master of our destiny, the Force and Life in man, can make us what we ought to be. Thy duty, O man, thy obligation, thy existence itself is unto Him, for Him and through Him alone. And He the blessed Spirit hath implanted Himself in every gift with which thou art enriched—in every noble aspiration, in every upward impulse, in every high humanity, in every yearning after holiness. The best nature in thee is the offspring of GOD, a part of himself, consubstantial and co-eternal. Fear not then, nor distrust thy nature, O my beloved, but learn early to rule the carnal in thee by the spiritual

law, the earthly by the heavenly, and then thyself shall be transfigured into what is not thyself, the natural into the supernatural, the man into the GOD ; thy own heart shall be thy own home, and the saints with their GOD shall come to dwell in thee now and evermore.

The Sorrows of the Righteous.

AND art thou cast down, O my son, because thou seest the ascendancy of wrong, the defeat of truth and the sorrows of the righteous? Art thou despondent because of the evil counsel and the bad example that prevail? Remember for one moment I beseech thee, that it was never otherwise in any land or age, that this is the natural effect of the struggle between good and evil, a struggle through which alone the good can outgrow and outlive what is not good. Indeed, the present world is not perfect, but neither is it what thou dost imagine in thy dark discontent; and if it was made after thy liking, and all things in it were made agreeable to thee, take my word, within a little while thou thyself wouldst get weary of it and wouldst wish it to be remade after some very different model. Be patient, therefore, in thy judgments, bear with things as thou findest them, and let the purpose and methods of GOD have their way. There is no

denying that fearful corruption's are on all sides of us: masked hypocrisy successfully making for its ends; painted falsehood in the robes of assumed truth, and worldliness, selfishness and sensuality throwing a glitter on the merest pretensions of religious life; folly and madness dancing and howling in the mimicry of holy zeal; evil practices, evil motives, evil examples of all sorts coming out of their hiding places to shove away innocence; boastful covetousness and evil-eyed envy finding their fit opportunity to act. And thou art depressed and hurt because in all this wretched confusion thou dost feel thy helplessness and canst do nothing to put matters right. I feel for all thy speechless sorrow, O religious man, and wish to offer thee consolation. Behold how amidst the outcries and pollutions of midnight the eternal lustres of the stars shine undimmed, how the tumults and heavings of the hungry sea can never touch the noble heights of the goodly ship. What is high overlooks what is low, but doth not cease to be still lofty; light penetrates darkness, but darkness cannot penetrate the light. Infinite pity

may sometimes seem to fail to cure wickedness, and the indignation of the righteous may not be able to bring down fire and sword from the heavens. But untruth and impurity shall not darken the face of the son of GOD, and the howlings of the deluded shall not disturb the tranquillity of his soul. Learn to discern, O my son, what thou camest to do, what thou didst not come to do ; bear thy load in patience and meekness, and trust in GOD in all things. But never put thy shoulder to the burden which is not intended for thee, lest the weight of the universe crush thee. Never take in thy hands all the work of Divine Omnipotence. Indeed thou shalt not be tolerant to wrong-doing, amenable to impurity and dissimulation ; thou shalt have no part or lot in what defiles thy conscience, even it be for the noblest ends. Better it were for thee to live in utter loneliness and wilderness than in company with what is vile and false. But tell me when wert thou appointed the judge of mankind, who gave thee charge over the good and the bad ? If thou hast any lawful realm to rule, my son, thy own heart is thy natural inheritance, seize that and rule it with

all thy might. Then when other charges are entrusted to thee, thou shalt also be able to bear them like a man. The disorders and bad works of men may indeed warn thee and move thy indignation, but if they make disorder in thy own heart or provoke feelings of personal enmity and vengeance, in trying to be and to do good thou hast turned to evil; and the very wrong of which thou complainest in others has its seat in thyself. Better far it were that thou shouldst live far from the abodes of men than be guilty of putting down wrong with wrong and paying the wicked in their own coin. It is very doubtful if wrong was ever put down by wrong; but even if it was, wrongdoing for the sake of the right will nevertheless bring sorrow to the doors of him who does it. O foolish child of mine, thou hast learnt a great deal, but thou hast not learnt to be patient to the evil-doer; thou hast not learnt to let Providence have its own way with bad men. Because the boastful wrongdoer hurts thee in thy works and plans, thou wouldst fain take his judgment in thy own hands, and decree his summary destruction. But nothing

falls down or rises up summarily. Wickedness indeed is doomed, but it is only in time and by the slow-moving law of righteousness that evil works out its own doom, and the good GOD gives even the wicked themselves repeated opportunities to retrace their steps before they are overtaken by the final consequence of their acts. And as for goodness, not once, not twice, but many times must it go through fierce fires, many times must it be overthrown and made to lie in the dust before it becomes fit for its final inheritance.

The reward of righteousness is seldom in this world, certainly not in its full measure. But reality, strength, peace and assurance it always enjoys. Postpone, therefore, the day of thy triumph, O thou who dost labour and fight for the cause of GOD, be prepared to see that His enemies should again and again defeat his purposes; but labour and fight all the same in the simple faith that thine is the good fight and the good cause. Fight as the spirit of GOD leads thee, free from self-will, free from spite, in thy love of truth, in thy love of man, and out of obedience to the great Master. But this

know, that the best fighters and the best labourers never lose the light and calmness of their souls, neither their wisdom nor the power of forgiveness nor even the sagacity of learning from their enemies. If they destroy, they rebuild as soon as they break down; if they slay, they revive what they have slain, in a better form. Indeed justice is unalterable, and truth is as sharp as a sword, neither softness nor sentiment is to be confounded with faith, force and holiness. But the test of truth and purity and love lies in the tranquillity of a man's soul; when that is gone, well mayst thou suspect that all is not right with thee. If thou hast founded thy life-work on truth and righteousness, inasmuch as these are undying and indefeasible, thy faith and thy peace shall not be cast down. If the purpose of GOD is the sole stimulus of thy labours and activities, as GOD is Almighty, so thou shalt not be feeble. Or if by the infirmities of thy nature thou feelest at times depressed and helpless, O my beloved son, cast thyself with all the more devotedness upon the bosom of the Father, let the cry of thy prayers rise before Him without ceasing, let thy devotions be

more faithful and fervent than ever before, and the Lord shall renew thy strength, shall lift up His countenance to thee, bless thee according to the wishes of thy heart, and establish thy good work in His kingdom for all time !

Things Perishable and Imperishable.

MY son, thou sayst thou hast believed in the truth of eternal perfection. Now tell me, dost thou advance unceasingly in thy present life, alive in spirituality and godlikeness? For if in this life the progress of thy character is not continuous, what proof hast thou that hereafter thou shalt not die but live and grow for ever? Let me assure thee, O my son, that much, very much, too much, of what thou callst thyself is destined to perish when death overtakes thee here. Alas, thy thoughts, thy accomplishments, thy affections, ambitions, sorrows, enjoyments are as passing showers of summer rain, as chasing shadows and lights which checker the landscape so long as they are; but they are for a very brief while indeed, and when they are gone nothing remains but the dull pallor of death. What continuous progress canst thou hope to make in the perishable things of the earth? Thou hast earned thy fortune, built thy house, made thy name,

brought up thy family, what more is there to do?— Now thou art nearing the end of thy course and must soon depart. In these perishable acquirements there is no more advance. Keep what thou hast as long as thou mayst, do not despond, but never forget thou shalt have to leave them. Therefore, learn to discern between what things are perishable and what things are not, and in imperishable things make thy daily advance. For knowst thou not, O mortal man, the seeds of immortality are planted in thee, and when these seeds begin to grow, to that growth there is no end—no, neither in this life, nor in that beyond: the truth of eternal life is concerning them alone. Indeed all things work in favour of him who is minded after spiritual things, and when that is so, even what is perishable becomes imperishable to help the perfection of the soul and the fulfilment of the everlasting assurances of GOD. Mind and body, the teachings and joys of the senses, the relations of life, social duties, intellectual pursuits and moral culture, all become spiritualised by constant communion with the Spirit of GOD. But still what is of earth must be left

behind here. What is of heaven, if thou hast acquired it here, thou shalt carry hence as thy portion in the life of endless progress. I say again, discern between the mortal and immortal part in thyself, strive to turn the mortal into the immortal, and grow ceaselessly.

Now let us see what some of these immortal things are. First of all, daily grow in the knowledge of GOD, of His self-revelation in things outside of thee, in things inside of thee, in sacred scriptures, in men of GOD and in the great events of history. My son, the wisdom that comes from the sure knowledge of GOD is not in thee or but in a very small measure. A few opinions, a few sentiments, a little ceremony or a few prayers, do not make the whole wisdom of divine things. Watch and pray, search, strive, discipline thyself and meditate devoutly, that in every perception of sense, in every thought and impulse, in every fact and event, thou mayst find the glory of the Divine Spirit; for in the absorption of such insight there is life immortal. And, believe me, nothing opens the fountain of wisdom and insight more than genuine heartfelt faith, aye, faith

bordering on superstition. Faith and wisdom and insight are progressive things, and of their progress there is no end, neither in this life nor in the life to come. Thou hast seen little, known little, believed little, and feelest thou tired so soon of the life of the spirit? O thou immortal soul, cease not to grow in the knowledge of GOD.

I will tell thee another thing, my son, wherein thou wilt find no end of progress, that is self-control and self-devotedness. Alas! thy chief fault is that thou hast been so ill able to overcome thy bad habits of body and mind, so that now the evil in thee hath become thy very self, hath deluded thee with false notions of religion and morality, and impelled thee to find excuses and arguments in defence of thy weakness. But befooled as thou art by thy passions, thou canst not deny the great need there is to govern them and the numberless desires that follow them. The earlier thou dost set thyself to that work the better for thy future, for, indeed, that work, though delayed, must be begun. Sayst thou that because thou art not so often or so much angry or vengeful or covetous as thy neighbour,

thy heart is clean before the Lord? Sayst thou that the calmness and dignity of thy spirit remain unruffled by the experiences and thoughts of thy daily life, and for all the evils which men have done to thee thou hast never wished to do them anything but good? If thou canst not say this, there is very great need of further self-examination and self-suppression. So long as the body remains, the thorns in the flesh, of which the holiest men complained, must remain; and though indeed the grace of GOD is sufficient for all infirmities, thou must ceaselessly, aye, untiringly watch over thyself, rule thyself, deny thyself, humble thyself, crucify thyself. This means death in life, and thou must practise that death in life. This is not a matter of one day or two days, of youth or manhood or old age, but of every opportunity and condition as long as life lasts. For what sure knowledge of God, or depth of insight is possible as long as a man's eyes are darkened by passion or selfishness or hatred or pride? What progress in wisdom can he make when a man is bound down to the prison-house of his own unregenerate desires? Advance, therefore,

every day, advance in overcoming thyself in the petty struggles of th^y life, wherever thy lot is cast. Thou shalt meet with no end of failure, no end of trouble ; but thou art bound to triumph in the end.

It has become an old saying now that lower passions can only be conquered by higher passions, hatred by love, resentment by forgiveness, worldly-mindedness by renunciation. All the holy passions of the religious man's nature are included in the passion of love to GOD. The passion of serving GOD is an all-devouring passion that overcomes every physical and moral obstacle in its way and can be resisted neither by the flesh nor by the world. For after all a man is what the nature of his mind makes him—low if his self is the lower carnal self, high if it is the higher or divine self that elevates him. And who can acquire or retain that high state if he does not suppress the animal and worldly-minded person in him, if he does not struggle with infinite pains to keep the lofty place in spirit which he sometimes reaches? It is not by taking too much thought to keep thyself exalted above the rest of thy kind, O man, that thou canst be the son of GOD ; it is rather

by taking too little thought, by a simple and natural unconsciousness of thy greatness or littleness ; it is by utter absorption in the passionate love of GOD and His service, by holy enthusiasm and fervent humanity, thou canst see above worldly mindedness and meanness. And this holy passion is of slow but ceaseless growth. Ask thyself if thou art making daily progress in the passion of serving GOD and man ; or it is merely the routine of habit that keeps thee to thy work in the community ? Is it a deep and lifelong vow thou hast taken to work out the destiny placed before thee by Some One not thyself, a vow that grows more solemn and imperious as thy time shortens here on earth, or a mere mechanical impulse that carries thee to thy end, as the stream carries a log of wood. Thou art not a hireling, but a prince in the Kingdom, achieving the purpose of GOD, thy King and thy Father. And thou hast not done yet what thou camest to do. What madness, then, is this to dally with thy time and thy gifts, to play with thy own passions and the follies of men when thy time is so short, thy calling so high and thy vow unfulfilled ! Hasten on with

thy work, for that alone will last ; learn to grow in self-consecration ; practise absorption in the loving service of GOD and man. That is a kind of communion which adds continually to insight, deepens wisdom, brings man nearer to GOD, aids devotion, suppresses pride, prejudice and passion, and in a word makes religion a living thing, an evergrowing reality.

The Personal ⁴¹God.

It is, O my son, a difficult thing to hold before thee the Spirit of GOD as a living Person and a real Presence. To make it easy and practicable all religions have invented some figure of stone or wood, some historic personage or picture, some symbol, even in the shape of bread and wine, which they try to realise as the form of GOD at the time of worship. All this may be natural, perhaps inevitable, but it is not lawful for thee in these present times. Now, tell me how thou art going to realise the Spirit-GOD as a Person whom all thy senses and all thy soul shall at once accept as living and real? I allow that thou hast sometimes felt the impulse of devotional sentiments in thy daily worship, I admit that thou art a believer and that sometimes thy belief has consolidated into faith, conduct and character. But I do not think that the formless Eternal hath taken form in the sight of thy soul as a distinct Being apart from thyself, apart from everything else, with a purpose and a will, a heart and a mind, all His own,

whom daily and repeatedly thou beholdest, to offer the allegiance of thy whole being. Let me tell thee thy prayer often loses its point, thy faith its force, thy devotion its profit, because thou holdst the personality of GOD in an indistinct, half-hearted manner. It is not proved to thee as thy own soul is, or any other man's. What proof hath the image-worshipper that his idol is a real person, or the devout Christian that the bread and wine of the Holy Eucharist have a real presence? The proof lies in the devotee's faith, which faith makes the reality self-evident. And to thee I say that the same faith thou shalt have. This faith is an unaccountable thing—why it comes to one and not to another, or whence it comes, why its degrees differ, I cannot say. But this I know, it is a gift from within, from on high. We may affect it and behave as if we had it, though we have it not; but without faith no progress in religion is possible. All true faith in the reality, in the presence, in the living personality, of the Spirit of GOD must be a direct revelation to the soul of man. GOD must give every man to know directly what He is; then the man has faith. It

may come through a book or through an event or through some teacher or nothing that one can define, but it must come as a revelation. The question to ask thyself is,—has it been so to thee? To me it has come as the Life, the all-willing, all-doing, all-compelling Life—the Life of the body, of the soul, of all the universe—the infinitely loving, sustaining, living GOD! To most persons GOD is no more than “Our Father in heaven;” and they look upward in His search and find a vacancy. To some persons His Providence vaguely intimates itself in the mazes of life’s events. Providence is a fearful reality. It acts slowly and by imperceptible Laws, but it overtakes all men and things at last. To a few, very few only, GOD is a Living Being: His presence penetrates the inmost regions, and His Providence rules everything. O thou who hast loved Him and served Him and believed Him and obeyed Him, why dost thou not perceive Him as a living present Person beside thee, why dost thou cast thy prayers to the winds and grope after thy GOD in the darkness and despondency of thine own moods? It is strange that the image-worshipper

should see and rejoice in the presence of his deity—a lifeless image or symbol which he has himself set up, and thou in this living glorious temple of nature, in this living mighty humanity, shouldst not see a great living GOD! Indeed the scriptures reveal Him, the prophets reveal Him, and nature in all its expanse reveals Him. But all this revelation loses its meaning and force, if it does not reveal to thee the wonderful Person from whose spirit they are; because what do they all unfold if they do not unfold the living personal GOD?

Some men say that the Absolute and the Infinite cannot be realised under human conditions. Can the finite and relative be fully realised? Who can say he realises in perception or in consciousness the full dimensions or the forces of the sun or the star systems? Who can say he realises the magnitude of a great man like Buddha or Christ? We perceive from a vast distance, and the magnitudes and forces of objects are tempered to the capacity of our vision: in their fullness and wholeness we do not realise them, but we do know enough of their nature and their laws to guide us in our course.

They throw and adjust themselves within the capacities and conditions of our nature. And I say similarly GOD pours Himself within the conditions and capacities of our natures. Who will say that He hath not this power? I declare that He hath. We know His nature, behold the light of His face, realise the blessedness of His attributes, and feel the reality of His wonderful being, according to the measure of our souls; but of His infinity, of the wholeness—of the measureless immensities—of His eternal magnitude we do not know all. The infinite GOD finds a centre on the point of an atom, though the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him; and the inspired eye-sight of faith wonders to behold His countenance in everything. Fix thy whole being, O man of faith, all thy thought, love, aspiration in the centre of everything wherein the Spirit-Person reveals himself, whether it be a span of the blue sky, or a morning flower, or a startling fact of life, or the human face divine, yea whether it be thine own joyous ethereal soul; and at each step thou shalt behold His presence. Now He will visit thee, now as a Father and Guardian whose eye is ever

on thee ; now as 'a loving Mother whose kindness, tenderness, forgiveness, unfailing help stream into thy heart through a thousand things ; now as a faithful Friend who can never desert thee ; now as a wise unfailing Preceptor whose every word is strength and support ; and anon as a ready Judge whose inexorable justice thou shalt not escape. Then all Scripture becometh His covenant and all Law standeth out in letters of fire. Then all prophets become His message-bearers sent to enlighten, confirm and guide as thou canst not guide thyself. Then all the world becomes a scene where the Spirit places thee to play thine appointed part, He by thy side always. And all nature becomes a glorious robe through which the lustre of the Spirit breaks out undimmed. My son, my son, GOD is a soul, not a body, and thou art a soul ; thou art no mere flesh ; with the soul behold the soul as a person does a person. Let all the light and spiritual power in thee, all the self-alienation and pride, be merged in His spirit and personality. Lose thy lower unbelieving nature in thy GOD, let every feeling and every faculty be perfected in absorbed com-

munion with Him. And I promise thee there shall grow on thee angelic wings—fourfold powers of insight into wisdom, holiness, love and peace ; and thou shalt take thy flight to the land where all doubt and disbelief are for ever at an end, where thou shalt find a more glorious and imperishable home than thou didst ever possess here.

Where is thy God ?

MY son, fear not but closely question thy soul
“ Soul ! where is thy GOD ? ” For it is most important thou shouldst know where thy Father’s everlasting mansion is, that thou too, O wanderer, mayst dwell with Him and be at rest. What avails it if the blessed Spirit be sometimes found in the house of prayer ? That may be full and fragrant with dear remembrances of the past. But thou hast had to bid farewell to it, and most others must some day forsake the place where their fathers worshipped. The great temple of Solomon lies in ruins at Jerusalem, and the shrine at Buddh Gya is silent and forsaken. GOD dwells not in piles raised with man’s hands. Where dwells He, O my son, that thou mayst behold Him always, and live secure as the child with its loving Parent ? Dwells the Spirit in the inspiring groves of the north, or the sunny strands of the summer sea, in the sacred isles where yearly the pilgrims go, or near consecrated streams and wells, in Horeb, Hermon, or

Himalaya, in Hellenic fountains, or the holy Ganges? Aye, nature indeed is His glorious habitation—the heavens with all their lights are the glimpses of His face; but nature passes away, and the heavens are but a moving show which thy mortal eyes shall not always behold, or beholding shall not always understand. Nature's book is a sealed scripture to many and many a devout reader; it is only the few who dimly discern its intimations. The fair fields and fine landscapes are fleeting from thine eye in the country-side as from a man in the rushing railway train—even Wordsworth mourns—"the things which I have seen I now can see no more;"

But yet I know, where'er I go,

That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

If then the glory hath passed away from nature, tell me, O my son, where, in what better land, dwells thy GOD in His truth that thou mayst look up to the light of His countenance and be ever glad? That land is thine own soul! My son, where and whence is all that beauty and loftiness of com-

munion, that immanence of power and spirit, which thou hast enjoyed in land and sky? From thine own soul! For believe me thou dost never behold anything good or great outside which thou didst not locate there from within. All the marvels of thy senses, the brilliances of color and light, the harmonies of sound, the suggestions of fragrance, are from within. The senses reveal GOD first within thee, then without, but thou art foolishly content with the outer Presence, and knowest not the inner Sanctuary. The elevations of thought which men or things or events or scriptures inspire, the infinitudes of reason, the services of love, the impulses of sanctity which all persons can claim, are surely within, though often called out from without. All true religion is in the spirit, rites and ceremonies only shadow it dimly. All deep relationship between man and man is first within, then embodied in brotherhoods. All the universe is an expression of the Inner Divine Reason, all history the expression of the Inner Purpose, all the arts the expression of the Inner Beauty. These things remind us of, remake within us, our forgotten Ideal.

The Spirit thus reveals himself ; but to whom is the revelation if not to thy spirit ? All the deep devotions thou hast known, all the heavenly meditations amidst which thou hast lived, all the true prayers thou hast prayed, all the painful or cheerful self-sacrifices thou hast laid on the altar, all the holy raptures thou hast enjoyed, are not lost ; they gathered in the heart of the Eternal as the riches of thy soul. Possess them there, for the earth is empty and is passing away. In thy soul, therefore, find the centre of all thou hast seen or heard or believed or loved or worshipped or known of the image of GOD. Pursue thy trade with the whole world in all the great concerns of human life, acquire wisdom, learn to be good, give and get all kindness and affection, take part in the worship of GOD and the offices of humanity, but gather all thy gains from every sphere within the store-house of thy character. Everything waxes old and alien, all men are becoming strange, only the heart is ever fresh and new, This inner nature, O my son, is the abode of the Deity whence no man may drive thee away. All thy pilgrimages have now nearly ended, and point

to that as the holiest shrine, that thou, old and weary, may not have to go far from thy home to find thy GOD. The blue pathless oceans where thou didst roam not in vain to behold the Infinite, have yielded to thee their secrets and treasured the boundless GOD within thyself. The glowing horizons of the tropics where thou wert born, the wonderful skies of northern and southern lands of the West, have added brightness upon brightness to the Divine Countenance within thy soul. Thou needst not wander in those climes again ; learn to adore the ever-glorious GOD within thyself. Many are the altars from which the unspeakable Presence has shone upon thee ; in the tabernacles of thine own people the self-revealed Deity hath cast upon thee the spell of his nearness, and made utterances to thee which thou hast repeated to other men. But thou art far now from all temples and gatherings, GOD hath made thine own heart His chosen altar, all altars have mingled their sanctities there. Cleanse thou, cleanse thy heart with every diligence, cast away every impurity of motive, every uncleanness of attachment, every bitterness of hatred, and

thy heart will be the mirror where all the radiances of the Righteous GOD shall be reflected in their glory. The heights and lights of humanity from history and scripture have made their way within thee. GOD fills thee, dwells in thee, shall never desert thee, and shall ever grant more and more of His fulness within thy soul.

On Saintliness.

MY son, thou hast had enough of the world, now settle down to the life of a saint. Think what thou must do to turn thy soul into the sanctuary of thy GOD. Bid adieu to the controversies, quench these fires of passion, turn thy back upon the competitions of the world, and make ready for the abodes of the blessed. For what advantage is it to thee that thou art a victor over thine enemies here, if the true mission of thy spirit hath failed, and peace and sanctity are no longer in thy house? The test of saintliness is perfect peace, with the Spirit of GOD in thine own soul. Wretched is the man, and unholy in his wretchedness, whom the Spirit within him accuses and convicts. For where will he find refuge, if his heart offers him none? Fain would everybody live in the peace of GOD, but few indeed there are who would pay its price in righteous exertion. The labour of self-conquest is a lifelong labour, and the duty of renunciation has no end as long as a man has anything to call

his own. And if he has nothing to call his own, what fear has he to renounce it? If thou wouldst be a saint, overcome all thy spite and high desire, overcome every tendency to self-sufficiency, self-indulgence and self-justification. O unreflecting man, indeed many impulses of love of the flesh, love of the world and its ways, love of approbation and the passion to rule make the motives of thy restless endeavours. Early learn to master these impulses and thus slowly acquire the peace of the saints. How can thy brows be cooled, thy pulse be staid, thy voice composed, and thy looks serene, if thy passions and thy overwrought sensitiveness do not subside into the dignity of inner peace? An agitated countenance bespeaks the agitated spirit; but the saint hath found his rest in God.

My son, hast thou known the blessing of a sweet temper, of kindliness, goodness and forgiveness amidst provocation? Believe me, a saintly temper is a most rare thing. Sweetness of speech and mind is somewhat natural in youth; but sad experiences and repeated disappointments in life

will sour thy disposition if thou dost not beware. Peace with one's own lot in life, peace with the spirits of the just, above all peace with the Spirit of GOD, and as much peace as is possible with all men, is the unfailing fountain of that quiet temper which qualifies the true saint in his earthly course. If this manifold peace doth not fall to thy lot, then find thy sweetness in a lowly mind, live as the humble grass on the road-side which softens and beautifies the earth though all men tread on it. Bless all men, all women and all children, bless and curse not even those who curse thee, and then GOD will turn their cursing into blessing, and redouble it with thy own blessing which thou grudgest to no man. There is nothing so bitter as hatred. The saint is always composed, but he is not timid or weak or subservient. Self-conquest means conquest of fear, double-mindedness and flattery of the rich and strong. There is no true sweet-mindedness without holiness, and holiness is born of stern self-repression and of a stern sense of truth and righteousness in all conditions. But, my son, stern to others, how lenient thou hast been to

thyself, and how impatient thou 'art of other men's sternness towards thee! I have seen men of independence, distinction and godliness black the boots of their inferiors and tie up their shoe-strings. Canst thou do as much and keep the dignity of thy mind? I have known the lowliest and meanest of menial services rendered by saintly men whose learning and culture are undoubted; princes stooping to street-beggary for paupers' benefit; tender, delicate women ministering amidst scenes of bloodshed and terror. My son, saintliness does not mean barren sentimentality, or a display of parrot-knowledge of religious texts; it is the testimony of everyday life to long cherished faith and principle. Yet I have known unreligious men showing a continued record of services,—doctors, nurses, and priests very active and industrious, mainly for the love of money or praise, and most undevout when they came under the stress of circumstances. Everything that is of outward conformity may only mean display, it is the innermost love of purity that passeth show and maketh for the saintliness of GOD'S own. I have the recollection of a man who seldom watched

a sick-bed, whose alms-giving was inconsiderable and infrequent, who smeared not his body in ashes, nor wore sackcloth round his loins, but the lustre of true saintliness was on his brow, lilies seemed to spring from the ground where he trod, and without direct deeds he became the inspirer of numberless services and sacrifices to the glory of GOD and good of man.

Far above all things a saint is a man rapt in GOD. His meditations and communions are not the result of habit or the effect of discipline, but the force of nature rushing out to find its kindred in GOD and His saints. His devotions are not a domestic or social function, but an inebriation and ecstasy without which the soul would simply perish. It is no mere earnest GOD-seeking which is a valuable thing for us all, nor is it even mere GOD-finding in which so few of us indeed succeed. The great saints among mankind were found and seized by the Spirit of GOD who gave them no rest in anything but Himself and His communion. My son, remember this my last word, the true fellowship and the true service of the Lord always mean a life-

long and life-giving consecration to the fulfilment of His purpose as revealed to thee. Be thou faithful at all times to the highest moods of thy soul. •

On Absorption in God.

MY son, believest thou in the doctrine of absorption, of submergence in the Spirit of GOD, till not a trace of the sense of an alien self remains behind? Or believest thou in the critical metaphysics of certain religionists who must interpose a wall of assertive self-consciousness between the Spirit of GOD and the spirit of man? What communion between the Infinite and finite is possible, between the flowing stream and the shoreless sea, if the one does not receive, enclose, overspread and hide the other? How will *communion* be possible without *union*; and what is union between thee and thy GOD but thy own self-forgetfulness in the blessedness of His being? Doubtless thou hast outgrown the common error of supposing that to absorb is to annihilate. To absorb is to make a thing new, to change man into a god—it is the rebirth of man in GOD. To unite thy poor isolated nature with the mysterious life-giving nature of the Spirit Supreme is not to destroy thy soul, but to lead it to partake

of divine perfection. It makes man the son of GOD without at all traducing the blessedness or the glory of GOD. All vain self-remembrance has the taint and fear of aberration in it the fateful risk of change, of inconstancy, of fall; all natural self-forgetfulness, self-submergence, means life in and with GOD, the repeated continuity of which is the foretaste of eternal bliss. Yet there is such a thing as devout self-remembrance, and that is a new revelation of thy higher self as the Son of GOD.

Let us see how this is to be made real in this world. Now we view man's life as made up of speech, thought, feeling and action. Can there be self-absorption in human speech? My son, the supreme worth of thy daily utterances of devotion is that they do lead thee out of thy worldly cares, the excitements of passion and pain, the wicked inducements of the examples of men, that they do lead thee away and far into the depths of GOD, where thy tired self finds its home and its hiding place. For if thy devotional exercise is not an ecstasy and an absorption in GOD, thy religion shall give thee no peace. Build for thyself a home within thy home,

a wilderness in the city, a pavilion in the wilderness, whither in thy daily and nightly worship thou shalt retire from everything tainted with worldliness and sinfulness, and find absorption in the presence and joyousness of thy GOD. This is all so true, all so new, so internal that the world knoweth it not. But the speech of devotion, though it may be rapturous, is only for a while. The power of profound speaking means the power of prophecy; it is a gift of the Supreme Reason; speech is a revelation from GOD to man, from man to man. But the revealing word that cometh from above must cease somewhere and somewhen; it must give place to silence, to the breathless silence of absorbed thought, to "Yoga, subjective and objective." Self-contained silence is the very meridian of the spiritual heavens. How sayst thou then that there is no absorption in devout thought? The region of inspired, rapt, unuttered thought, if thou hast cultivated it long enough and industriously, is the transcendent region of GOD-life; and in the paradise of GOD-life, which encircles all, but is apart from all, the Spirit of GOD is all in all. There is neither world nor self nor any of its

attachments, neither desire nor disappointments, neither disease nor depression nor death. Ah, GOD-rapt undifferentenced thought! The soul at its coming here came with it; through life's pilgrimage this has been my support; and if I am permitted to depart in its absorption, I shall count myself blessed indeed.

My son, he thinks best who loves best both GOD and man and all living things and all things inanimate. The absorbed lover of GOD has his abode in nature and his higher abode in the spirit of humanity; such a lover only is privileged to enjoy the absorption of the mystic thought of GOD. Love is always the living fuel to the fires of thought, as thought is always the living fuel to the fires of love. Thought and love are both silent, and these two go to make up the incorporation of man into the Divine Reason which is the heart of GOD. Read the scriptures constantly, O my son, peruse all great books of wisdom and experience, but no true wisdom will alight on thy soul until all self, with its hundred mean interests and its worldliness, is for the while eliminated out of thee, until thou art thoroughly con-

sumed by the enthusiasm and love of knowing GOD and of being merged in Him. But speech, thought and devout emotion are all internal and subjective. Life is most of it action. Can a man act while immersed and absorbed in the Spirit of GOD ; can he earn and spend, work and watch, serve and fight, bless and warn, nay declaim and denounce, filled with the Spirit of GOD ? Certainly he can and he shall. The true test of a man's relations with the Indweller is in his life ; the genuine evidence of his faith, devotion, pure thought and pure self-consecration is his life of daily duty. GOD is not only the Master of thy activities, but their motive, the only motive of thy doing, whatever thou doest. If all thy acts are not so many sacraments of thy life-long worship, thou art neither an accepted devotee nor a chosen servant. My son, all the countless inconsistencies of a man's spiritual life are to be found in his acts—the motives, the tastes, the conducts which mark his character ; his works follow him even to the inner presence of the All-holy. If, therefore, the life which he leads before the All-seeing Judge, before all men, and before his own conscience, is not a perpetual

immersion in the obedience and communion of GOD, he shall undo the very best part of his spiritual life. And if the acts of his life be a series of observances, to testify and intensify his oneness with GOD, verily his is GOD-life, his is true absorption in the Supreme Blessedness.

PRAYER.

O SPIRIT of GOD, teach me, give me deeper contemplation, communion and absorption in Thy blessedness, for I feel oneness with Thee to be a greater prize than any other act or state of religious life. One moment of perfect incorporation with Thee means the direct evidence of the deep spiritual realities of immortal life. Father, prayers express only passing needs, and all prayer is at an end when I am deep in Thee, because all sorrow and want are at an end. Then I am all that I wish to be. My deep-seated needs are soon forgotten in Thy all-sufficing grace, but O Beloved, O Eternal, what can exhaust the consciousness of Thy union? I ask, therefore, drown me in that consciousness, and let all self-remembrance, all sense of my own goodness and badness, cease in me. The greater part of my

life have I spent in mourning for my sins and in seeking Thy face everywhere; now hast Thou granted unto Thy servant much consolation and shed on him the gracious light of Thy countenance. I pray, be Thou my everlasting abode, and hide Thou me from myself. My virtues may cause me to be vain, my sins may tempt me to despond; only self-forgetfulness in the sense of perfect union with Thy Spirit gives me rest and safety. Present with Thee, cause me to be absent to all else—absent to passion and provocation and pride, absent to my whole self, absent to the whole world. Grant that Thy presence and perfection may fill my whole being with Thee.

The One Thing Needful.

MY son, let me remind thee that what thou callst thy liberalism and breadth of view has done thee not a little harm. It would be better if thou wouldst limit thyself within narrower, clearer and more practical bounds of religious life. Thy ideals are too vast for thee to put into practice, thy principles too intellectual to be binding, and thy aims too diffuse to be real. Thou art troubled with too many objects, busy with too many occupations; thou dost permit too many things to distract thy poor little heart. The result is thou dost fall short in every direction; thou hast not attained maturity in anything. Attempting too much, thou hast achieved too little. Thou art not successful as a worldly man, thou art not successful as a religious man. By the guidance of the Spirit of GOD, by the gracious example and influence of holy men, by a wise knowledge of thy own nature, henceforth restrict thyself to a few things, nay rather to one

thing, and try to be perfect in that. I allow, my son, that thy faith enjoins a broad harmony of many systems, many teachings and many teachers ; but nevertheless remember that a man is saved not by running after many pursuits at the same time, but by planting himself in the centre of all things—that centre his moral and spiritual life, his relation to his GOD. One real thing, sought and followed industriously, leads to the possession of all things which are lawful ; but too many objects dissipate a man's energy, divide his mind and defeat his purpose. Even in this many-sided Dispensation of the Spirit it is in the clearness and singleness of thine aim that thou shalt have power and repose. But thou hast cultivated so wide an area that thou reapest nothing ; thou runnest so many races that thou art far from every goal : thou believest in so many great men that thou art the disciple of no one amongst them ; thou dost accept the inspiration of so many religious systems that thou canst follow the teaching of no particular scripture ; thou believest in so many doctrines that not one of them definitely shapes thy faith and con-

duct. Thus too much light dazzles thee, too many teachers confound thee and too much reading hath made thee well-nigh mad. Thou hast had enough of these gipsy wanderings, this epicurean eclecticism; settle now into some definite religious culture, and follow one particular course. Let one man be thy exemplar; then thou mayst love and honor all and each of them will help thee. Let one pursuit engross all thy attention, though there are many pursuits and they may all be honourable. Let one scripture be thy constant reading, though thou shalt honor all according to thy opportunity and read all sacred books. When thou camest into GOD'S kingdom, simplicity was thy chief virtue, and singleness of mind the attitude of thy nature. Why hast thou lost the great object of thy search in the wild clamour which many men make with many voices around thee? Follow thou rather the still small voice within thy soul, and do well the special work entrusted to thy hands. If thou doest that well, with the light of GOD, thou shalt illumine a great deal of space and a great many objects around thee, and everything which thou touchest

will be lighted from within. Each great man excelled in one thing, though perhaps he showed interest in more things than one. One becomes a great poet, another a great musician, another a great philosopher. In the religious body, too, one becomes a devotee, another a theologian, another a minister, another a prophet. Seldom does any one become all things. Why then art thou afflicted with this passion for multiplicity? Follow thou after unity with GOD.

My son, hast thou anything for which thou feelst a special aptitude? Hath the hand of Destiny, which is the hand of GOD, appointed thee a special path, a secret relation between thy soul and Himself, in which He dwells to thy infinite delight and an infinite light? Hast thou made this all-important discovery? If not, thou shalt still have to perform this endless round of social and intellectual and moral and educational experiments without peace or permanence in anything. This desultory life is better than idleness; but thy time is far spent now, the end of all things is too near for such aimless toil; arouse thyself to ask

thy Father to unfold before thy sight the *one* thing needful in thy case, the *one* all-important duty, the *one* special revelation which shall make thee the well-beloved son of GOD chosen amongst ten thousand. It matters not whether, thou art a doctor or scribe or judge or preacher or teacher of youth or any other thing. But it matters too much to thee if thou shalt waste thyself in fruitless cultures and unspiritual toils, seeing that life is short and thy pilgrimage is long. Therefore, I counsel thee, return from thy wanderings and fruitless activities, return to thy home, even if it be a hut on the hill-side, forsake strange gods and goddesses whom thou hast worshipped, devote thyself to the *one* true GOD only and the *one* true work thou camest here to do.

Unworldliness.

HARD indeed is it, O my son, to be in the midst of the world and yet to remain untainted by its influence. Hard is it to be in the midst of men and yet to be untouched by their ill-will and bad example. It is hard to live close to dirt without being dirty, to live amidst provocation without being angry. Think not too harshly, therefore, of those who fled because they could not fight, who retired from the world in the spirit of self-preservation. There is a season for everything, to be in the world, to be out of the world, to mix with men, to separate from men, to live in the midst of excitements and temptations, to be completely alone with thy own soul and thy own GOD. But it seldom happens to ordinary men to turn their backs to the world completely, to live alone in the kingdom of the Spirit. It is my lot and thy lot to spend our days as other men have always done in the midst of the world's distractions ; tempted, tried, often over-

come, in penitence and self-reproach in the hope of the forgiveness and grace of GOD. Early choose thy work and thy station, decide how thou art to keep thy life untainted, and try to perfect thyself amidst so much that draws thee away from GOD.

Cultivate kindly dispositions towards all men, even those who are notoriously unkind to thyself; but if possible know clearly beforehand where thou canst be of use and where thou canst not; and if thou canst not serve men, keep out of their way to the best of thy power. Do not be officious with thy services, if thou wouldst have them held of any value. Love, if thou canst, all men whom thou hast once loved, even if they cease to regard thee; love more and more such men as come across thee in thy course; remember that hatred is an evil thing to thee even more than to the person thou hatest. But always beware thou dost not entangle thyself in worldly affairs which are full of selfishness, passion and vanity. Take me not to mean that I dissuade thee from practical duties, for religion is nothing if it does not lead to such duties. But duty is often a sorry disguise for men's selfish desire, and

thus fails to bring on the dignity and calmness which belong to the pursuit and service of the holy GOD. For nothing is so high and heavenly as loving and doing the works of love ; nothing is so deadly to the spirit as indulging selfish motives under the guise of love and duty. Learn to withdraw all thy activities, to withdraw all thy outward expressions of love, rather than cast reproach upon the heavenly facts of unworldly relationship. It is this which explains the meaning of the precept, " Being in the world, be as out of it." Livest thou in the city ? Let it be as if thou livedst in the wilderness. Hast thou to move in the place of business, move with thine eyes towards heaven ; heed not thy loss or gain, but do just the work thou hast got to do. It will indeed result in thy being looked upon an anomaly amongst men, misunderstood, misreported. It may result in some of thy powers falling into disuse. It may lead to men trying to take advantage of thy simplicity, and in thy finding none but very commonplace people for thy associates. Well, take my assurance these may perhaps not often edify thee but they will not contaminate thee.

Simplicity, affectionateness and natural good sense are wholesome. Live far from every kind of temptation unless the impulses of thy spiritual sense force thee into the midst of it, and then temptations will work thee no harm but add strength to thy strength. Live far from the rich and the high placed, unless they need thee or love thee because of thy character. Much less seek distinction for thyself, or seek wealth or fine company or the praise of women and men. There is great distinction in the genuine love of obscurity ; few men care to have it, and thou shalt be all the more undisturbed in the loneliness of thy pursuit. Knowest thou not the Great Giver has hidden in thee a great treasure of heavenly virtue ? Make an exchange of unworldly excellence with humble unworldly men ; the commerce of the worldly-minded and the vain will rob thee of thy natural health without bringing any worthy substitute in its place. Yet fear not to mix with any one for the sake of thy appointed work. Above all things, whether thou art in the world or outside it, seek the absorption of thy mind in the beatific communion of GOD. His Spirit will make of

the world in which thou livest a veritable paradise, feed all thy spiritual instincts, find for thee the brothers and sisters whom thou mightst love and serve without harm, impose a wholesome check on thy passions and self-interests, keep thee from worldly defilement, enrich thee in all godly graces and make thy life a holy sanctuary for thyself and others.

Be Natural.

MY son, be simple, be real, be natural, dare to be as GOD fashioned thee. Thou shalt have some disadvantage thus in the world's estimate, but thy simplicity will be no loss but much and true gain to thee in the end. Believe me, all great virtues are born not made; and though it is conversely true that all great faults are also natural, yet let me say that the importance of religious culture lies in this that it serves the twofold purpose of weakening and at last removing natural faults, at the same time that it strengthens and matures natural virtues to their perfection. But in order that the inherent weaknesses of nature should be overcome and its inherent excellences perfected, it is essentially necessary that nature itself may be maintained in its integrity, not marred by the artificial processes imposed by a so-called religion or civilisation. Yea, my son, in this matter of moral changes in man let me teach thee to believe in the supernatural, for

faith expects and history records supernatural conversion. But let me tell thee supernatural changes arise by fixed laws out of the natural. What is supernatural takes place so naturally that in our short-sightedness we do not look for it. Nothing is so contrary to the mind of GOD as the unnatural. The terrible curse of modern culture is that it makes men artificial, undervalues the wholesome enthusiasms of nature and casts the plastic materials of our mind into arbitrary fashions and not into divine ideals. Therefore, men in trying to be religious become devoid of sound sense, and grow so unnatural that their faculties cease to grow ; they become hard and vain, they become like machines and try to make machines of others. Beware of the influence of such men. The end of all true insight is self-insight, which is only another word for the seeing of GOD in thy own nature. If thou hast not known this, thou hast yet to learn the first elements of the knowledge of GOD. It is only in a secondary sense that GOD enters into thee from the outside ; in the primary sense He reveals Himself within thee through the wonderworking power of thy bodily

and mental senses, through the all-piercing, all-compelling power of the facts of this mysterious world. So at the last resort thy own nature is thy true sanctuary. Everything of sacredness or glory is there. Only thou hast to find it out patiently. But in order that this thy nature may celebrate its high worship within thyself, thou shouldst keep it from the hundred discords which lie around and in thee. The vilenesses, the weaknesses, the deadnesses, the cravings, that strangely wind into thy innate excellence, have each of them to be unbound, have to be cast away or assimilated and turned into the virtues they imprison. Then they cease to be hindrances and become helps, for thus alone may thy nature be raised to its Divine level. Perpetual discipline, is therefore, the need of every man's life, perpetual care against the growth of evil habit, perpetual self-direction and self-determination of faculty and power under the guidance of the great Indweller. A man is thus reborn, remade and grows unto GOD in forms of spiritual excellence which may well be regarded as supernatural. But all the same it is a growth out of the natural, from

the lower to the 'higher, from the carnal to the divine, from the perishable to the imperishable. 'Despair not of thy nature whoever thou art, but set thyself to work out its deliverance by aspiration, diligence, and the grace of GOD. For if thy nature be thy friend, great indeed is the cause of thy rejoicing ; whereas if thy nature be thine enemy, thou art indeed the unhappiest of mortals. O thou preacher, learn, therefore, to convert thine own heart before thou dost convert any other man. O thou wanderer, let thy soul be a refuge and a stronghold unto thyself before thou canst be a refuge to any other wanderer. The highest prize a man may have as the reward of his prayer and self discipline is the sense of sanctification, the apotheosis of his own nature. The greater thy nature, the harder will be thy struggle. But fear not the struggle. The flower which blooms under all the influences of earth and heaven, which is the handiwork of the perfect GOD, loses neither its form nor color nor fragrance in the process of its perfection. So the soul under a difficult religious culture does not lose its nature, but becomes larger, richer, stronger and

sweeter, bearing within itself immortal meaning which will surely produce a tenfold and hundred-fold of truth in time. All thy natural kindred, and even some of thine enemies, will receive of thy fulness. Thus nature and culture, inspiration and impulse, the individual and the community, are harmonised in the regenerate man. My son, under adverse influences that surround thee, if thou art able to be true to thy GOD-given nature, if thou art able to outgrow thy follies and animalisms, thou shalt surely be the son of GOD and the image of thy Father.

Arise.

CHILD of GOD, image of the Most High, arise to the stature of thy divine manhood, arise to the height of thy destiny. This is not the plane of life thou wert meant for, the place thou occupiest now is not the final refuge for thy spirit. O son of GOD, be not content with thy achievements, whatsoever they may be ; but move thou onward, upward, for thy Father reserves for thee a much nobler dignity in His heavenly country. Nor imagine that His Kingdom is somewhere beyond the skies, in the land of the dead ; but know thy inheritance is here on earth, thy domain is in the land of the living, the Father's Kingdom is amongst the men and women whom thou hast known. Prosper thou in spirit here on earth that thou mayst do well in heaven. Why dost thou forget, O my beloved, how wonderfully thou art made ; why forget the promise and power stored in thee, the ultimate mysteries thou shalt solve, and the blessing eternal which the

providence of GOD holds in trust for thee? Think not, child of GOD, thou wert fashioned by a creative freak, or arorest like a toad-stool out of the dunghill in a brief night. Corruption did not breed thee. Such an idea is no honor to thy Creator or to thyself. Indeed the almighty power of GOD can make what it would; but GOD'S power is not His greatest glory; the greater glory is in His unsearchable wisdom, the marvellous secrecy of the processes of His work; and His greatest glory is the ineffable excellence of love which is the deepest of His secrets. All these and much more of the like mysteries go to make thy past, present and future. Yes, O thou man of the spirit, thou art the formative, not the finished, result of a very vast operation in the secret places of the Eternal; secret because hidden in the fathomless depths of His wisdom. Thou didst begin long before thou camest here; thou wert pre-designed and pre-ordained at the foundation of the world. There has been and there shall be room for thee in these infinite mansions, if thou wilt be only true to thyself. Strange insights and images flash across thy mind

as in a mirror, when thou dost brood on the essence, origin, development, on the rise, the fall, the rerise, the renewed life and the ultimate, destiny, of thy spirit. O man, endless ages of geologic time, endless systems of stars and planets, infinite types of living things, great and small, have been displaced and disturbed to form thee what thou art in thy body and in thy soul. From the first beginning of creation, when the world was a speck of star-dust, thou wert being designed and made ; and to the end of things when this solid earth will dissolve like a mist, thou shalt continue to be made and remade, into what symmetry of perfection who can tell? From thy mother's womb, throughout thy life, thou art a true standing miracle, the proved inheritor of all created things, the richest promise of what thy race is to be in the future. Beds of ocean and glades of forest, creatures swimming or creeping or flying or running have been made use of to form thy bodily structure. Think then what ascending levels of spiritual humanity, what prophets, seers, saints, martyrs and sons of 'GOD have gone to make thy soul and all its aspirations ! Think, O my beloved

son, what unknown struggles, unrequited sorrows, what terrors of the spirit, what nights of temptation, what agonies of death, what years of pain, have been borne to make thy humanity ! What multitudes of mothers have watched and wept, what successions of fathers have laboured and fallen, what generations of the wise and the good and the hard-working, unrecorded friends of man, have lived and died to make thee a spiritual being ! And such a being as thou, ascended out of so many grades of upward humanity, divine in thy origin, in thy growth, in thy destiny, what hast thou made of thyself ? Now grovelling in the mire as an unclean creature, now creeping as a reptile, now splashing like a frog, now crawling like a fish, now flapping in thy uncertain course as a bat, or raging like a wolf, feeding on the offals of things, or gibbering like an ape ! How thy life indicates all the phases of animalism out of which thy flesh and blood are said to have arisen ! Instead of being the son of GOD, the heir of the immortals, chooseth thou rather to be the son of brute, beast and bird, the descendant of soulless, mindless monsters ? Child

of GOD, arise to be thyself. Into a handful of Himalayan dust the spirit breathed itself, and raised a race of Aryan prophets and seers, time-honored and true-hearted, thy forefathers. Out of a Bactrian peasant the Spirit raised Abraham *Khalil Illahi* (the Friend of GOD). Out of a goat-herd in Egypt the GREAT I AM called out Moses, the leader and the lawgiver. The camel-driver of the Arabian sands became Muhammad (GOD'S Beloved). The same Spirit is in thee and with thee, yes He and all the angelic souls whom He hath made immortal. Rise thou by His grace to be an immortal also, to be the son and image of GOD. Strive thou ceaselessly as all thy foregone ancestors have done, to work out an undying life, the divine purpose for which thou wert ordained and sent hither. Trust me, the Almighty is working for thee; trust me, all lands and peoples are working for thee; the divinest prophets stand as watchmen at thy doors; do thy work with the utmost enthusiasm and arise to be the son and heir of GOD.

Devout Unknowing.

TAKE not too much credit to thyself, O my son, for knowing men, or understanding the principles that guide things and shape events. Thou knowst not even thine own poor little heart, nor canst direct thy own affairs ; how then canst thou pretend to know fully the motive springs of other men's life, how canst thou take charge of the affairs and events of any part of the world ? Be wise to leave all that to the All-knowing GOD. Even when thou knowst things, be as if thou knewst not. Pray as well as strive that thy own motives may be blameless, and in each thing that concerns thee be sure that thou hast the guidance of GOD. The false steps that lead to the fall of man are taken by him in the madness of his self-conceit and self-sufficiency ; he, knowing' little, imagines he knows all ; he sees not what is beyond him and rushes headlong to his ruin. As for thyself walk thou slowly and circumspectly. Walk in the darkness and simplicity

of faith rather than in the glare of folly. Pray for light at each step thou takest, but walk steadily and commit the charge of thy soul into the hands of the wise GOD. Do not hurry, keep thy soul in patience ; move not in a passion against the wrong-doer ; let the Spirit of GOD act in all things through thee according to His law, will and wisdom. It is strange to think how little men believe in an active Providence, though they glibly talk about it ! Thou, my son, have faith that the Spirit of GOD moves in the heart of men and things, have faith that the same Spirit is in league with thee when thou strivest and prayst that good may come out of thy life unto all beings. Behold everything is a mystery ; evil is a mystery, good is a mystery, the triumph of good is a mystery, the triumph of evil is a mystery, and nothing availeth but devout though unknowing faith in the purpose and wisdom of GOD.

Therefore, take these hidden things as thou findest them, and work thy way upwards in giving effect to the order of Divine thoughts. Do no injustice to any man, even if he be an unjust man

himself. Do no partiality to any man or to thyself, even if others are disposed to be partial to thee. Indeed thou shalt not find many to give thee preference ; because of that, better not advance thy own claims, rather keep thyself backward, and do thine appointed work until others recognise thy place and give it to thee. Believe me, there is a purpose and a meaning in the preferences and rejections by men, and mourn not too much that thou art left in isolation. In obscurity greater things are done than in eminence, till so-called eminence becomes obscure, and so-called obscurity becomes eminent. The only duty for thee is the strenuous endeavour to be of service to thy fellowmen, heedless of consequences to thyself, aye heedless also of success. The workman never spares himself in the work given him to do ; the work is not his, it is the Master's, who will know what value to set on that which has been done, whether to keep it or reject it. Kept or rejected, the workman is given what he ought to get for what he has done. Never try to overreach, never intrigue, never stand in the way, never strike in the dark, never strike in the back,

never make success the measure of good work, never seek personal pre-eminence in any undertaking. Then if thy aspiration and endeavour be worthy, the Giver of all good will bless it with excellent reward.

The Voice of Inspiration.

MY son, dost thou claim to be instructed in all things by the very mouth of the Lord? Dost thou claim to know the mind of the Almighty to perfection? Produce thy credentials and prove thy claim. For it is not every one who pretends to be inspired that has the heavenly gift of hearing the Word; but the first requisite for it is the strictest conformity in every act of life to the will and law of the Spirit of GOD. That man alone who has taken real pains to be of the same mind with the Lord, has the great privilege of Divine guidance in the difficult emergencies of life. For even a wise and thoughtful man will not undertake to advise thee, if thou art not prepared to submit thy whole case to him. Thou shalt put thyself to some trouble and self-renunciation to follow what he prescribes. How then darest thou to think that the All-wise Eternal GOD will trust His counsels to thee when thou hast so heedlessly set thy life to thy own

plans and fancies? The wisdom and instruction of the Spirit of GOD comes to man as the result of the whole course and law of his life, and not as the result of a momentary act of verbal appeal. If the general course of thy conduct be carnal or self-willed or unlawful or unspiritual, thou hast no right to hope that when the crisis comes thou wilt command the light of the supreme wisdom merely by calling for it. Man's prayer is but a breath, his need is but a passing mood, his conduct is but the result of many and mixed motives; alas! also his loud claim of being directed by GOD is often no better than an empty boast, an overweening conceit or a cruel self-delusion. True, indeed, sometimes the voice of the Spirit will come unsought like a meteor out of the clear sky, as it came to St. Paul at the gates of Damascus, as it came to Moses on the top of Sinai, or as it came to our own Sakya Muni amidst the luxuries of the court of Kapilavastu. But such inspiration comes on the rarest occasions, seldom more than once in a lifetime. While thou needest the help of the voice of GOD at every step of life, the Divine Spirit ought to be thy companion

and guardian for all time. What doest thou, how orderest thou thy life, what pains hast thou taken, what new depths hast discovered, what new light into the secrets of GOD has come to thee, what self-will hast thou renounced, what humiliations hast borne, what solitudes hast thou frequented, that the priceless gift of GOD'S presence and glory may be in thy heart always? No great end was ever served without means that were adequate. No great achievement was ever made without a thousand miseries and failures. Wilt thou attain unity with the blessed All-holy GOD, wilt thou have His companionship and ceaseless counsel, and yet retain thy passions, inanities, hatreds and self-delusions? Thou canst not do both. Thou wilt add darkness to thy darkness, deeper unreality to thy usual errors, thou wilt bring into contempt the whole doctrine of direct access to the Deity, if thou claimest inspiration for thy self-will. Better seek thou the counsel of holy men whom thou canst understand than the counsel of the Eternal whom thou dost not know. Better search the holy scriptures, where the experiences and dealings of the past are recorded, than search in

thy darkened mind for the illumination it cannot produce. Light can come only from light, darkness comes from darkness.

Thy faculties are given to thee, O man, that in the crooked ways of the world thou shouldst use them to know and do thy appointed work, and render acceptable service to thy fellow-men as a return for all thou hast got from thy Father. In the righteous and faithful use of thy powers—and know all powers are GOD-given—thy GOD shall lead thee and enlighten thee and open out what is best in thy heart. But instead of taking due pains to bring thy body, mind, heart to their fullest activity, thou hast misused thy powers, thou hast acted as it pleased thee in the serious emergencies of life, and then idly looked up to the great GOD to inspire and justify thy action! Why shouldst thou involve the wisdom and righteousness of Heaven in thine own unrighteousness and folly? Why shouldst thou try to escape from the consequences of thy weakness and faithlessness by saying thou didst act under the command of Heaven, when thou didst act out of the impulses of thy frail mind? Heaven's

light comes when a man has put forth his utmost soul to meet the stress of duty, when he truly and deeply regrets his folly and self-sufficiency, when he is not ashamed to confess his errors before GOD and man and to determine upon a new course of life. Man then knows the mind of GOD when he has thoroughly renounced his own mind. Thou believest in direct access to the throne of the All-holy GOD? Few believe in this divine privilege; if thou believest, know that thy way to thy GOD is barred, not by any edict from on high, but by thy own personality, mis-shapen and enlarged by imagination and wilfulness. Remove the bar and thou shalt see GOD'S countenance as thou never saw, and hear the voice of GOD as thou never heard.

The glory of the Divine countenance is revealed as an unfading light in that man's face who has taken leave of earthly motives and selfish passions. The worldly-minded understand it not, they are satisfied with their own conceits and fancies. My son, hast thou experienced the travail of knowing the mind of GOD and bearing witness to the companionship of the Spirit? O thou child of vanity,

thou hast to be 'brought down to the very dust, and all thy bravery and boast have to be made as nothing. The Spirit of GOD brooks no equality; and hast thou made thyself the equal and the rival of GOD Almighty? Nay, thou canst not force Him to reveal Himself, thou shalt have to watch alone in the darkness of His sanctuary, night after night, day after day, in weariness of the flesh and heaviness of heart. Inspiration is the highest prize of communion with GOD, it comes when a man has separated himself from the world completely. Thou hast too much fear of death, too much love of life, to follow the Spirit of GOD to the end. Thou hast too much regard for thy own place, for thy own feelings, for thy own wounds, for thy own grievances, to seek with singleness of mind the glory of GOD. Thou hast too many ends, too many plans, too many works in hand, to find the need of absorption in the one great object of giving thyself to GOD alone. O child of the world, learn to see thyself in thy true nature; why imaginest thou thyself as something other than thyself? It does thee no good, it does nobody any good. Many worldly-minded men have

been turned to the spiritual mind, many sinners have become inspired saints, by penitence and simplicity of soul ; self-delusion is always the fatal snare. Thou needest not despair, therefore, whosoever thou art ; be assured thy time will also come. But now is the moment to know thyself in all humility, to confess thy many sins with true sorrow, deny thyself in all sincerity, to wait and watch and pray and be guided by holy men that the Spirit may make his way into thee. May GOD fold away the screens of delusion and vanity, reveal his countenance in thee, speak in clear unmistakable accents in thy heart, and finally breathe that mystic breath in all thy thoughts which makes the truly inspired life.

About Trouble and its Cure.

MY son, vain it is for thee to think thou canst flee from trouble. It were well enough if thou didst not fall into trouble through thy own conscious misdeeds, for then it would be possible to meet thy misfortune like the son of GOD and wring out of its hand some secret of true peace. For, behold, how the shadow of unrest darkens thy path whithersoever thou wouldst turn and howsoever thou mayst dispose of thy affairs, and it is not possible to share thy trouble with any one or find its cure anywhere. There is trouble for thee inside thy house; there is trouble for thee outside thy house. Though thou be surrounded by thy dear ones, it is a lonely life thou hast to live often, if thou art a godly man. Even if there be some one to take thy side when thou art hard-pressed, often, very often, unrest is in thy heart, for too many are against thee with or without cause; even thine own friends understand thee not, and thou knowst not how to

deal with all these. The deep warning of waste and illness is in thy body ; thou art troubled and anxious about thy means of livelihood which are constantly failing ; the call of duty unheeded becomes a cry of vengeance in thy conscience ; and it is a never-ending sorrow to remember how often thou art far from thy GOD. Except in the Spirit of GOD man hath neither friend nor sympathiser, none to understand him, none to stand by him. Seek thou Him with all thy heart, therefore ! If it is any pleasure to think that others have the same troubles as thou, take comfort, but at best it is a poor comfort and a selfish one. Rather learn to take thy life earnestly as thou dost find it, learn to accept trouble as the necessary and inevitable element in human things, and seek for its cure in the proper way. The hatred of pain is the real sting of pain. Have faith in the message of pain, welcome it when it comes, endure in the name of GOD, for He sends thee thy affliction ; let it impart to thee strength and cheerfulness. Thus disarm thy trouble. The cup of endurance is a bitter cup, but O my child, thou must take that cup in thy hand again and again and drink it to

the dregs. Endurance, even if it were not often wholesomer than enjoyment, is at least godly wisdom in an unwise generation. Endure the lesser misfortune, if thou wouldst avoid the greater and more unbearable one; learn to be quiet under the common unrest, if thou dislikest the uncommon misfortune; for whether greater or lesser, what thou callst trouble shall always sit as an unbidden guest at thy table, and thou couldst neither laugh nor reason it away. Thou must bear it meekly and without complaining as the Son of GOD bore it long before thee, and other sons of GOD have borne it ever since. Thou must remember that no godly trouble is self-caused, but sent to every man from on high, according to the measure 'of the capacity of his soul, to increase and heighten and perfect it for the purpose of his life-work. For surely trouble is a proof of the spirit, as fire is proof of the metal, showing whether and how far it is genuine, and how far it is not, in the claims to worth it is found to make. Have patience then in trouble. Have patience with thyself and with others. Feel for the infirmities of men and women who add to

thy burdens. Nothing strengthens so much as patient endurance which so few have.

Nor is that all. Trouble causes a man to cast about for consolation. True consolation comes mysteriously from beyond a man's own self, consolation is the reward of self-denial, prayerfulness and unworldliness; the unworldly mind comes from communion with spiritual men and the spirit of GOD, and such fellowship heals much trouble. Trouble also opens in thy heart the fountain of sympathy, for then canst thou feel what others feel who are less fortunate than thyself, canst give them the comfort and kindness which thou needst, thyself, and by the warm offerings of brotherly love thou wilt find the heavenly peace which Christ found by serving others in all his earthly troubles. For peace never cometh by much seeking or complaining, it is the natural fruit of a loving spirit which consents to endure all, that it may comfort and cheer some. For as things are now dispensed, thou must weep and thou must work, thou shalt be troubled and thou shalt be comforted, meekly waiting at the door

of the Father to take thy turn. Bear in mind none wept for ever, and none worked the whole lifelong day as well as the whole sleepless night without the spirit of peace descending on him from on high ; none ever endured the dispensations of a just GOD without the assurance and strength which He sendeth to the suffering and the meek. And though trouble may be at the door an unwelcome guest, it is very often the sweetest angel of peace in disguise.

Of Long Life.

DOST thou, O my son, cherish a fondness for long life ; dost thou wish to survive thy friends and contemporaries, thy work and thy usefulness, to have almost an everlasting career here on earth? Behold, this is a vanity in which most men secretly indulge ! A very long life is a very questionable gift ; it has its terrible disadvantages which thou dost not realise now while thou art still in comparative health and strength. Only for one moment think of the infirmities and helplessness of old age. Think of the sad mental weaknesses, ill-temper, childish selfishnesses, inevitable sillinesses and the sore trouble and fatigue imposed upon others when thou canst no longer take care of thyself. And then at last that dreaded death must come ; and thou diest like a useless worthless creature, and thy death is a relief even to those to whom some time ago thy life seemed so precious ! Yet I could not, on the other hand, counsel thee to sigh for a short

life and comfortable death. The mystery of death shall be left to the unsearchable wisdom of Him in whom is man's life here and who calleth him elsewhere, why none can say. There is an august purpose for which man is made, for which he is allowed to remain on earth, for which, whether he is ready or not, he hath to quit these scenes. It is best for thee to observe the purpose, to trace it in every scene and circumstance, as long as thou canst, and to fulfil it to the best of thy power. It is pure foolishness to wish to live long because of one's fondness for the world ; it is pure selfishness to wish to die before thy time, that thou mayst cheat death of its trials and sufferings. It is always good to live wisely and faithfully, waiting for the Master's call ; it is good to work or rest as He wills. But while it is given to thee to live, spend thyself cheerfully to do good, sparing nothing. Live happily, if thou canst ; but even if thou canst not, live to make others happy. My son, if practicable, let not a day pass without thy giving relief or happiness to some one. Even when old, thou couldst do this. Indeed as the flesh declines, in

order to be able to keep thyself from disease and death, thou hast to take too much care of thyself ; and taking so much care of oneself is sometimes a sore trouble, full of degrading anxieties to the spirit. But if thy life is still spared to thee and thy care of thyself is blessed with some measure of health and strength, it is not with the object that thou shouldst live to eat and enjoy and be worldly-minded in thy old age, or that thou shouldst in the course of nature decline and be decrepit and be useless in the world, but that thou shouldst spend the fund of thy experience and aged wisdom to guide the generation and be a light to the ignorant and the youthful. Life, like wealth, is not to be hoarded up to lie useless ; he loses life who loves it. Life, like treasure, is for spending wisely ; he that gives it keeps it for ever. Taking thought of death does not prolong life, nor does wishing for death sweeten the labour of duty. But to work heedless of life and death, to spend every faculty and every power for the good of the world, is to live and die for the glory of GOD. Blessed are they who die with their usefulness about them, blessed are they

who are called away early. But more blessed they who die in the fulness of age, who die loving and serving the Lord in all things to the last. Old age is a precious gift, if it can justify and complete its earlier message and promise. But old age is not to be coveted. The love of life is ingrained in man. This is good, because it continues the beneficent activities of the world. But the love of life for the sake of life is an unmanly attachment which crowds the world with drones and idlers and burdensome persons. Prepare to die when thy time comes, late or soon ; but as long as thou livest, let thy life be a daily acceptable sacrifice unto the Lord. Live and die in the Lord daily.

Permanence of Spirit.

THINE access yet to the presence and communion of the Spirit, O my son, is so limited, thine impulses, thoughts, aspirations so scanty and uncertain, that it is not possible for thee to possess thy soul in peace or patience at all times. And thou art tossed and troubled, downcast and despairing, in spite of thy religiousness ; thou feelst bitterly how very slow is thy progress towards the heavenly kingdom. Thou needst, O man, to be thrown upon thy resources for a very little while to realise that thou art nothing and that the great void, the sad end, in which all men disappear, is yawning at thy feet. The moods of thy mind are so uncountable that scarcely mayst thou be called the same man morning and evening. The animal spirits in thee rise and fall, rage and collapse, like a hundred furies fighting with each other and setting thy will and purpose at naught. In spite of thyself thou art often an animal, a demon and an enemy of GOD.

If thou art a little better than this now and then, it is by the mystery of the mercy of GOD undeserved and equally unretainable. What ground is there for boasting then that thou art a man of GOD? A man of GOD perhaps in other men's sight, but not a man of GOD in the sight of thine own conscience. For the godly man is not he who, at times, by the tides of circumstance, is lifted up heavenwards and is occasionally above his meaner self of flesh and earthly interest; every man has his exalted and unexalted moments, not thou alone. But the spiritual man is he who has attained a spiritual level below which he never falls. To him the door of access to the eternal throne is ever open; whatever the measure of that access may be, it is always open to him, his conscience is not defiled by any wilful act of disobedience. My son, seek thou permanence in thy place in the heavenly kingdom. It is not well that thou shouldst be so high and so low, all in the course of the same day—an angel and a devil and a block of stone by turns. All eternal life is permanent living in GOD, ever growing more, never less. But now the like-

ness of thine own image is so seldom the likeness of the Son of GOD ! Thou art so seldom thy true self ! I verily believe that thou hast been given the taste of the cup of immortal life, thou knowst what it is to be saved, earthly as thou art, and what it is to be admitted into the glory of the heavenly mansions. What the true saints of GOD felt, knew, thou little mortal hast also known and felt ; whenever thou hadst access to GOD thou wert a saint for the while. This indeed is true. This is thy undeniable experience. Salvation, grace, Christ-life, the unutterable rapture of beholding the face of GOD, are not reserved in a legendary heaven in some future state ; but the love of GOD is so bountiful towards us in these present times that even now we have a saving foretaste of it all. Our sorrow and shame is that, so highly favoured, we still fall flat so often, so grievously, through the wild undiscipline of our mind and body. We are freely given salvation, but we waste it ; we know holy living while at our devotions, but we defile it ; we have a vision of the glory and blessedness of the Divine countenance, but daily do we forsake and banish

the Spirit of GOD. If by the mercifulness of our great Father we so often regain what we lose, by our own fault we as often lose what we gain, and in the long run remain very much what we have always been, unadvanced in our way to the permanence of spiritual character.

My son, follow the ways of permanent and inseparable oneness with GOD, be saved now and for ever; as long as thou livest rise thou higher and higher in godly life. Rise very slowly, all true heavenward ascent is slow, but never fall from where thou hast risen once. Next time thou findest thy GOD, next time thou art sure that thou art reconciled with the All-Holy, take the vow never to do anything that produces in thee a contrary mind. Make around thee a magical ring of habits and occupations that will always keep thee within the saving and protecting influences of the presence and remembrance of GOD. Never give thy soul any respite to fall away from its place in the spirit realm. Let thy devotions follow thy meditations, let thy daily duty and work follow thy prayers, let thy studies follow thy work, let the companionship

of holy men fit in thy daily occupations, let one kind of absorption in GOD follow the intensity of another kind in thy waking hours. Then if there is any emptiness, any separation, any loneliness which thy self-discipline cannot remove, thou shalt find the Unseen Friend approach thee in ways unknown before, take thee by the hand and lift thee into higher levels of life than thou art familiar with and fix thy place for thee in spiritual life. But all this must be the result of thy real earnestness, thy unceasing prayers and endeavours, thy self-denials and self-discipline in the path of sanctity and thy unfailing trust that whatever happens to thee happens for thy highest good. GOD helps indeed His struggling devotee, but the struggle must be true and continuous.

Holiness Higher than Morality.

STRIVING, straining, hoping, desponding, yet trusting still to the gracious help of the Indwelling GOD, thou, O my son, shalt ever aspire after perfect saintliness. Because true sanctity is a treasure not so easy of acquirement as thou thinkest ; nay even when acquired, I know not if any one did preserve it ever unbroken in this our earthly life. So utterly humiliating is the soul's defeat in its fight with the passions and desires, that men do not like to confess their repeated shame, and they set up an easy artificial standard of holy life by laying down certain rules of religiousness which they mechanically follow and thus become slaves of their self-made formalism. We thus foolishly excuse our constant lapses into passion and carnality, we thoughtlessly justify our unrepentant state, we think our petty sanctimoniousness will keep us from the justice of GOD. Far better it were, my son, if at every fall from purity and failure at self-conquest thou didst

approach the threshold of thy Father's home, poured out thy shame and sorrow, asked forgiveness and promised to strive with renewed effort in future. Old or young, saint or sinner, all must struggle and fight and watch that the forces of the flesh and the vanities of the world may not find them slothful and rob them of their hard-won prize of the purity of conscience. Alas, O my son, how few are they who genuinely aspire to be holy ! I have known many men whose ambition for knowledge or eloquence or scholarship or public usefulness was very high ; such men were rightly esteemed, for such ambition is worthy. But few men, very few, has it been my lot to know whose ambition for holy living exceeded any other desire they felt in life. True sanctity of heart must include wisdom and piety and the service of man, but these things may or may not include sanctity. Men are satisfied if they are moral, if they are not immoral ; they do not perceive there is a higher thing than so-called moral character and that is perfect saintliness which does oftentimes come from deep and genuine devotions but cannot last

except by continuous struggle at self-conquest. Is holiness conscious of itself? Every healthy faculty and function, whether bodily or spiritual, is spontaneous; and what is healthy is free from morbid consciousness. It is only when an organ is diseased that we constantly think of it. True holiness does not study itself; it looks up to the perfect GOD; or if it looks to itself, it sees its own imperfection. Sanctity of life is the natural equilibrium of the highest spiritual virtue. Deep lowliness is a feature of men of sanctity. Indeed pride and purity never go together. But there is a dignity in holy living which always asserts itself as soon as anything impure touches or even approaches it. The sons of GOD are too high-minded to compound or parley with the children of evil. Though evil assails them from within and without and there is often a mortal wound in the flesh, they are stern and unyielding; evil finds no part in them. The inspiration of evil is never suppressed except by the enthusiasm of good; bad impulses never go until good impulses prevail. Thou knowst, my son, that the aggressive sense of self is the root

of all passion and that passion of self is the root of all unholiness. The forgetfulness of lower interests in the excitement of a great cause is the secret of holy living. I am so commonplace, even lower than commonplace, in the natural level of my life that, if I sometimes rise to supreme excellence, it is by supernatural power visiting me; and I eagerly long to remain in that state, and I struggle and strain and look up to GOD, not always in vain. Fasting is good, watching is good, self-denial is good; but all this is never sufficient for the eradication of evil from the heart. So long as the pride of one's own opinion or one's virtue remains, it will assert itself through fasting, through the wearing of sackcloth, through every form of self-denial and outward observance. Faith is proud, knowledge puffeth up, the keeping of the law often makes a man a Pharisee; only Divine humanity chastens, humbles and drives away self-sufficiency, only the fire of enthusiastic love for GOD and man refines the spirit into holiness. Selfless love and Divine humanity are one and the same thing. Love desires nothing but to do good, would receive no

flattery but prizes truth ; love makes the motive pure, the action blameless, and burns out the dross of insincerity and vainglory from the heart. Rarely blessed is the man who can love GOD with a passion, who can love his fellow-beings with a passion yet without an interest, because the flame of his soul has been kindled by the Holy of holies and will surely burn all iniquity out of him. It is sad to think that the element of this all-consuming, all-purifying love is in every man and woman, but they will not recognise it or make the right use of it. They will use it for satisfying their bad desires. Hence the meaning of holiness that indwells all heavenly love is so seldom spelt out, and it fails of doing its pure work. My son, by all means and as early as thou canst, enter into thy moral struggles with girded loins ; there can be no triumph without fight, no mastery without self-subjugation. And also thou must separate aught, local or sectarian or impermanent. My son, knowst thou the wonderful experience of realising that thou too art of GOD, in GOD, a spark of the Eternal Light, everything in or about thee divine and indeed imperishable ?

Though there be a fleshly birth and death and many changes attending many things, yet these, taken in their right import, surely spiritualise life. Man's self is nothing but a sense of being, even the substance of that sense is full of something not himself; every other thing about him is a mysterious Not-self, a rock of reality against which he beats himself in vain, a reality he cannot analyse, cannot explain. But he must accept it all trustfully; and in his helplessness he must retire to the Spirit within his heart where, if there is no deliberate evil, he finds a refuge in Providence and in Nature which gives him peace and disarms his fears and doubts. The longer and longer a man is in this state, the deeper he learns the lesson of true life. .

With some there arises a passion and enthusiasm of service to the Divine being and to all living men; in the overflow and fervour of that passion the sense of all other relations, even of a man's own dear ones, is overpowered. Knowst thou not, my son, hast thou never felt, that the soul, in the ecstasy of its communion with Eternal Love, rushes into a boundless region, rises above the senses, above

pleasure and pain, rises above life, above its good and evil, above the treatments of men and the changes of things? Death drops its threats, disease loses its fears, poverty its shame, evil its temptation and the world its cruel inequalities. I assure thee thou hast had some experience of this blessed state, but thou hast not believed it as coming from GOD or that it is oneness with Him and that thou art to strain every power in thee to abide in it as long as thou livest. One such vision converted many persecutors of many lands into saints who left their undying records in scriptures, in traditions and ancient verses. Thou, O modern man, hast had some such experiences, too, and still thou tarriest in thy unbelieving worldly-mindedness! The fear of death to the worldly man is an unconquerable fear, it shows itself at every step and in most trifling things. The overcoming or withdrawal of that fear is proof that the spiritual man hath received and believed in the wonderful assurances of GOD'S Spirit. Fear of any kind of loss and despair after the loss are sure signs that thou art unworthy of thy calling and worldly-minded.

And the deliverance from that fear and despair comes from oneness of spirit with GOD. The absorption of knowledge and insight is possible to a few men comparatively, the absorption of religious sentiment and devout service is more possible. Why dost thou compare the relative values of religious exercises? Why dost thou have so many preferences about thy way to heaven? Get there by any way and means that thou findest open to thee. Thy way shall not exactly be the way of other men, it shall not be exactly as thou thinkest; but thy appointed way shall surely lead thee to GOD.

My son, be assured there is such a thing in some men's character as the enthusiasm for others' good. Be it the service of his country, which Gladstone had in such a marvellous measure; be it the service of his church, which "General" Booth has; be it the service of humanity, which General Gordon had; be it the service of the poor as our own Vidya-sagar had. It is in human nature to be devoted to the good of man. To spend one's body, mind, money, time and life itself for the service of others

without the slightest trace of any motive of self-interest, is the passion of some minds specially constituted by GOD; and these minds have the further gift of inspiring others with a like enthusiasm. Such men make the salt of the earth, they make life bearable in the midst of its selfish discouraging experiences. The wisdom and insight of spiritual things is an elevating thing, it is equally elevating to be in the ecstasy of devotional communion with GOD; but these things will have a ring of unreality about them, if they are not combined with that enthusiasm for the well-being of man. Spiritual wisdom shows that kind of life to be the greatest reality in the world's affairs; the impulses of piety naturally and inevitably lead to it; and then only does a man have foretaste of life beyond death when he consciously and unconsciously lives for the everlasting purposes of GOD. The most potent thing in a godly man's career is an absorbing selfless ambition after which he strives with his last breath. My son, be thine a goal which is far and high; it may seem impracticable, but Providence has placed it before thee, and not thou thyself.

Live to be like some one inaccessibly higher than thyself but who nevertheless calls out to thee from heaven to come nearer and nearer, and do something like what he did. It matters not that till thy day of death thou canst not be perfectly like thine exemplar. It is enough that thou hast struggled to live for GOD and for humanity. The model men of the earth are not many, the genuine spiritual teachers of the world are not many; nor are they always successful, nor can they always cleverly manage men or things. Gladstone for whom all England mourns, was often heartily ridiculed and cruelly defeated. But the unceasing service of man, the devout service of GOD, the Christian motive and the loftiest faith have immortalised him.

Bind Thyself to the Lord.

BIND, bind thyself with many a chain, forge thy fetters hard and strong, O thou bondsman of the Lord, if thou wouldst have freedom and force. In holy bondage is holy freedom. Carnal liberty makes man the slave of bad habits in the end. Every limb of thy body is in rebellion, every faculty of thy mind is wild ; thou hast strayed far from the abode of peace, far and often hast thou strayed till thou hast lost thy path and thy faith and thy judgment, and there is no repose in thy spirit. If thy mind seeketh the service of GOD, thy body like a lump of clay falleth flat on the road ; and thou canst not pick it together, and thy propensities seek ungodly satisfaction. If thy body is tired and weak and perplexed and would rest in the bosom of the Father, thy mind unrestrained slips out of thy hand and wanders amidst forbidden thoughts, gross feelings and wishes for which thy conscience reproaches thee in vain. The rains and

storms are against thee; the dust and glare are against thee; the noises and impurities of the city are against thee; the dullness, loneliness and silence of the forest are against thee; the cares and distractions of the family-life are against thee; the sorrows, sufferings and helpless isolations of the recluse-life are against thee. Say, O my son, what will draw thee nearer to thy true home, what will help thee to hide thyself in the breast of the great blessed GOD? For what should have been for thee is now against thee, what should have led thee to rest hath led thee away from rest, what should have reconciled thee with thy present life maketh thee feel more dead than alive. Bind thyself fast to the doors of GOD'S holy Presence-chamber, chain every limb to the service and to the purpose of the Most High; let thy feet, thy hands, thy eyes, ears and mouth obey the laws of GOD incessantly and for ever. Thy listless or indolent habits have been thy ruin, the fetters of sin bind thy senses and thoughts; so that, even if thou wouldst, thou hast not the power to be at peace with thyself. The associations and suggestions of thy vicious imagination

have been thy torture chamber wherein all things are transformed into the likeness of sins which thou hast committed. To escape from this loathsome chamber thou shalt have to train thyself ceaselessly and 'for long to holy association with men, women and things; let them suggest to thy mind heavenly thoughts, and not hellish. This is not done in a day, nor in an easy indulgent way. Thou art suffered still to linger in thy body that its powers and possibilities, instead of driving thee away from the freedom of paradise, may turn thy very flesh into the chosen sanctuary of GOD. And with that great object thou must strain and scourge and purify everything that is in thee. O young man, this is the first law of holy living for thee. O old man, think not thy age excuses thee from the labour of self-sanctification. For now the lease of thy long-life is near its expiry; and though thou wouldst fain live sometime yet, remember that thou holdst thy body by a very uncertain tenure. Worthy it were and wise and timely, if thy bodily sanctuary, made wonderfully by the Hand unseen, were chastened and washed and sainted daily for

thy adored Lord to come and dwell with thee for long intervals. And O young man, from sure experience I do say, all usefulness, all worship, all character, all influence shall lie with the discipline and rigor which thou dost now practise upon the habits of thy body and mind. Wouldst thou that the community should accept thee and trust thy leading? Learn betimes to accept and obey the leading of others. Dare not be thine own leader in all things. Find out who is trustworthy, if thou art to be trustworthy thyself; find out who is pure, that thou mayst be pure thyself. Bind thyself with cords of steel to the purposes and teachings of GOD. He hath not left thee without guidance of men and events outside thee, whose authority thou shouldst obey. Old and young are heard to complain that all this is too much. They unite to say, "we have prayed to the Lord, we have repented, we have depended, we have accepted the dispensation of the Spirit, let Him now come, let Him give us freedom and rest." That indeed He will do. Freedom and rest doth He give to all creation unasked. The birds and beasts are free, the breezes and waters

are free. There is repose in heaven and earth. Why then dost thou ask for this gift? Thou hast broken or unheeded the laws that bring freedom and rest, and now shalt thou keep those laws with much travail. It is only they who toil that are blessed with rest. It is only they who keep the laws of health that are free from disease. It is only they who keep the laws of the land that are free from imprisonment. There is a toiling and striving in the spirit that can never end till life ends. Thou must labour and sweat and spend thyself without stint in whatever field thou art placed; and then, when the night comes when no man can work, rest will come to thee, and white-winged peace and the freedom of the children of GOD. Thou shalt without mercy and reserve bind and scourge every power of body and mind given to thy care, purify and chasten and confine thyself in the rigorous habits of holy living. Being ever under the high pressure of spiritual life, lose thou the power of thinking or doing evil. Then when thou dost least expect, the fountain of divine freedom in thy soul shall swell up with celestial impulse,

thy activities will bring thee repose which none but the beloved of GOD ever enjoy. At first it seems hard and troublesome and humiliating, but they that bind themselves to the Lord are freed by Him and crowned with that great peace which we all prize and seek after.

The Deeper Life.

MY child, O my child, sink thou to the serene depths of the true and everlasting life beneath all this stress and turmoil of the surface. Loosen thou thy spirit from all these dangerous entanglements; otherwise the tides of things will bear thee away and dash thee and make a total wreck of thy peace. Retire from this vain war of words: these plots and counter-plots, these anxious cares that will never end. Flee from the deceptions and rivalries which no man can keep off, which thicken around every scene where thou hast to play thy part for a brief while. Lite itself, life which thou lovest so fondly, is a vain show; the only reality in it is the doing of what thou owest to thy GOD to do who sent thee here. Thinkst thou that men are particularly happy because thou art 'alive, or will particularly miss thee if thou art called away? Only an atom, thou weavest thy destiny as a poor little cobweb which a breath of wind will blow away

into nothingness. Only GOD heedeth thee, bear thou Him in mind always. Do thy appointed work, little or much, faithfully and in good cheer; keep thy heart amidst the meannesses and petty crosses which must come and go; but I adjure thee, fix thy spirit and abide in the vast human verities, the supreme enthusiasms and faiths which are sent down by the life-experiences and death-lessons left by the great and blessed good. They trod these scenes, but were free from the fetters of vanity. That the sons of the world should be perplexed by the troubles of the world is natural; but that the sons of GOD should be enslaved by the cares of the world which they have renounced, is a sad sight. It is sad that, knowing the mind and doing the work of GOD in these changeful scenes, thou shouldst forfeit the calmness and peace due to thee from thy GOD, and be perplexed by the vanities which thou knowest are even now passing away. Why shouldst thou turn in dependency to ask where is thy GOD and where is His peace? Take one step outside of thy self-made confusion, and thou shalt enter into the

region of sublime contentment. For it is very true that the Spirit of GOD is never far from thee, nor outside thy life scenes; only in thy blindness thou dost imagine He hath left thee to thy troubles. Make time every day for some moments to go down to the very roots of thy being, to the very foundation of things, where GOD is all in all; and there abide in the dignity and rest of thy soul. The serenity and joyfulness of spiritual life are not so easily attainable or retainable, as thou dost think. It comes out of great soul-searching and great discomfort. We are all anxious to get hold of the joyfulness of the discovery without wishing to go through the discomfort of the search. The communion with the Spirit of GOD makes for peace and dignity, the contact with the world's vanities makes for the sorrow and bondage of sin. If thou art able to share in the former as the outcome of thy religious life, thou shalt have to prepare thyself to take thy share in the latter as the outcome of thy worldly life. And thou shalt have to do more. Thou shalt have to recognise and realise the spirit and purpose of GOD in the troubles and indignities

which environ the greater part of thy existence. Even when thou lovest thy peace, thy spirit should be dignified in thy hard-won conviction that thou art the son of the Almighty. The part which every man has to bear in the formation and consummation of his character is a most arduous and important part; and the sacredness and loftiness of his conduct will lie in how he plays his part. Thou must do what thou camest to do. Every duty is not equally exalted; but there is an element of sublimity in the humblest and smallest thing which thou owest to thy Maker and thy fellowmen to do. And believe me, even in the showiest scenes of life there is the vulgar commonplace when thy thought is the service of thyself. The unseen and unacknowledged realities of love and obedience in the small things of daily conduct make for the high serenities and transcendent joyousness of the spiritual man; while the accumulated selfishness and vainness of his everyday existence make the falsehood and secret unrest of the unspiritual man. Whoever ascended the topmost summit of a great mountain by a sudden leap? He has to climb breathlessly

every crag and every stone ; but every height gained freshens the breeze and renews the landscape ; every upward step is a joy and a triumph, till he rises to the regions which are so far above the ordinary world that the breath of heaven is always there, and the cessation of earthly noises and struggles and the wickedness of the enemy and the obstructions to the sight of the glory of GOD'S face

Dignity of Everyday Life.

ART thou despondent at the thought of thine own meanness and smallness? Dost thou brood over the vain uneventful life which thou hast lived in this world of grand possibilities? Indeed, O my son, a man hath but a few brief days here, and much even of his short time is taken up with useless thoughts and acts in keeping and forming relations which are as shortlived as he is himself. Not to speak of thy bodily and worldly life, even thy religious and moral life, as thou callst it, is so small, so full of peevish anxieties, insignificant successes and shameful defeats that well mightst thou grieve, son of GOD as thou art, that thou art such a pitiful unprofitable creature! There is no cause for thee to be proud or high-minded; there is too much cause to be sad and lowly and ashamed of this thy small, commonplace life. Yet I tell thee, my son, there is nothing mean or commonplace in the world, no condition and no act

of thy life is undignified, if thou hast not defiled it by deliberate wrong-doing of which thou needst to be ashamed. The object of a man's living exalts his life, and though few and brief his days ; and his acts unknown, they are a glory to him if they help to effect the oneness of his spirit with the Spirit of GOD, whose name be blessed for ever. Vain and pitiful and foolish beyond speaking is man's life, be he a conqueror or an empire-maker, be he who he may, if he has lived only to exalt himself and his earthly interests. He may loom as great in the mists and misleadings of the present ; but time which rights everything, proves oftentimes the littleness of the great and the greatness of the little. Complain not, therefore, that thy opportunities are mean and limited or thy companions dull and inappreciative. They are good enough for thee to try to do what thou camest for ; low and humble they may be, but they are stepping-stones to the temple where all greatness and glory abide. For man's self-giving unto GOD is the most transcendent of all realities ; there is no romance, no miracle, no resurrection, so wonderful as the soul's rise to

GOD. And thou, O my son, dost now and then rise to Him in thy long. life-pilgrimage; thou hast beheld His face again and again and hast been accepted as a son and a chosen servant. No means is contemptible that helps thee to attain that high reality, no state of body or mind is petty which serves that end, nothing is low or commonplace that will open to thee the mystery of oneness with the eternal GOD. Be it an act or a thought or a struggle or a sorrow or a sickness, whatever detaches thee from the bondage of the world's entanglements of passion and subjection to wickedness, whatever raises thee to the freedom of the Father's Presence and the vision of immortality, to oneness with the great and good among mankind, is lofty, is supernatural, fit to be remembered with reverence and awe! My son, canst thou set limits to the possibilities of things and events, canst thou measure or forecast the tides and tendencies of the Spirit, canst thou draw the line and say that certain things alone, and not certain others, will bring thee to the presence of thy GOD? Who knoweth where the Spirit's abiding

place is, whether in the clouds above or the plains and the city-centres or the corners of thine own heart? Who can tell whether He speaketh to the waiting soul in the depression of grief or the height of joy or the common struggles of life or the repentance of sin or the gloom of death? Call, therefore, nothing commonplace, nothing mean. Do not despond over every trouble and embarrassment; be not so ready to call thy life vain and useless, because thou hast not succeeded exactly on the lines which thou didst lay down for thyself. Some of those who are born great naturally cast a sort of glow on their surroundings, but the light fades and disappears when they disappear. It is the common man who by his faith, by his hard-won GOD-perception, 'exalts commonness to greatness and turns meanness to nobleness. Men's joys and sorrows, their interests, loves, struggles, plans are about equally commonplace; those of poor men usually quite evident, those of famous men less evident; all things are equally undignified which are without GOD. But the joys and sorrows of the poorest man have been dignified into the joys and

sorrows of all humanity, when they have been hallowed by the love of GOD and the service of man. The most obscure life has been raised aloft to be the standard for the whole race. My son, all greatness belongs to GOD, all glory is His, all power, everything that is profound or ennobling or everlasting. In only attaining that GOD canst thou rise out of thy littleness to a noble and immortal life. In striving to be like Him canst thou be truly exalted. Be thine the common everyday work of the place which thou art given amongst men; be thine the labours and sorrows that come unsought, the sacrifices unrecognised that the spirit must make for the Spirit; and then if there is any grace and mercy, any consolation and reward, any heaven and immortality, thou, too, shalt be exalted to that, and the countenance of GOD shall shine upon thee.

How to Live.

ANSWER thou, O my son, answer the supreme question : how to Live? For often have I told thee that GOD is Life, that Life is nothing but the presence of GOD-force in man. How to use the gift of that Presence, as life in its manifold forms goes by from its mysterious beginning to its mysterious end? How and unto what hast thou lived ; hast thou lived enough of life, lived in all the various spheres and functions open to thee, and found life always the cause of abundant blessedness? “ The trees live, live also the birds and herds of cattle ;” the life of man differs ; because he lives after the manner of the living GOD. Thou art called upon to live in earth the life of a god, for only such life is immortal. The Spirit lives in all he has made in this beauteous and fruitful earth ; the Spirit lives amongst all the people in their households, in their social and national life, in their religious and moral aspirations. Who hath counted the forms and out-goings of the spirit and life of GOD? But thy life, alas, how narrow, and feeble ; its duties paltry, few, shut out by the

sense of self ; its weaknesses, ill-humours, ill-doings, despondencies oftentimes making thy life scarcely worth living ! GOD lives for all, loves all, serves all. In the bounteousness of His self-giving so hidden is He that, though He fills all things, thou dost scarcely find where He is, unless thou, O my son, seekst Him diligently and ceaselessly. But man, who lives for himself and only for a few days, is so assertive that his little good work is hidden in his endless self-advancement. How to live after the manner of GOD ? Perpetual activity is true life. Live in every limb of thy body, in every faculty of thy mind, in every impulse and aspiration that is noble in thyself. Live in the life of other men who are around thee. Live with zest in this kindly earth which GOD hath furnished for thee, in thy home which is the sanctuary of mutual service ; live in the society of men and women to do thy good work ; live in the household of GOD among thy fellow-worshippers. Even as thou now art, live fully the mortal and immortal life which is one. But live not for thine own pleasure or worldly profit, only that is the canker that eats out the very heart of

life. Live not a riotous or impure life, for that, though charming now, surely means the courting of death in the near future. Live not to hate any man, for that mixes the gall of bitterness in the joy of existence and makes thee suffer as much as thy victim. Live not to seek and enjoy life only, for the search of pleasure often finds nothing but pain, and, believe me, there is often more happiness in devout suffering than in inglorious ease. Nor is this so-called activity the secret of true life, nor the cares of the household, nor the clamours of men's society. I tell thee there is more life in solitude with GOD than in the city's mad excitements; there is more lasting and fruitful life in the repose of contemplation and calmness of study than in the vulgar resorts of thoughtless men and women. My son, the necessary conditions under which this manifold life is to be lived are oftentimes hard and depressing. Be not surprised if sometimes thou findest them cruel. But here there is no choice; the conditions of life make a part of life itself, and thou canst not hope to have the blessings of the one without the hardships of the other. For never for-

get that earthly life means the perfecting for a higher life, and there is neither maturity nor perfection but through the severest discipline. Do not try to escape, therefore, from the heat and burden and effort of righteous living. It cannot be pleasant always to serve GOD and man. Take not into too much account that thou hast failed or succeeded in thy life-work. True success is not always worldly success; nor is it failure, if thou hast failed to secure popularity among thy fellows. Count it to be success before the witness of GOD that thou hast been faithful to every opportunity that was given thee; and if thou dost realise that, thou wouldst fain be quit of the strange scenes of this world to take thy place amongst the immortals. Believe, O my son, that thou hast not lived in vain if thou hast lived for GOD and in GOD, according to the measure of thy power, nay sometimes beyond that measure. If thou hast spent thyself and dost mean to spend thyself in living the GOD-life as shown by the great Exemplar of men, if thou meanst to be true to every relation of life, whether thou art great or small, immortal life shall be thine.

Be not a Hireling.

MY son, be not too exacting in thy conditions of service. Do not hope for immediate or adequate reward. Do not hope that thou shalt see all justice, all goodness, invariable wisdom, even unfailing law everywhere in this world. Problems will sometimes present themselves which thou canst not solve, depths will open within things which cannot be searched or sounded. Both physical and moral life will show anomalies before which thou shalt have to stand dumb. There is a Beyond hidden from all eyes, in which thou must be content to trust and be still. There is a veil over the face of all nature which thou canst neither rend nor remove. The wisest attitude is that of meekness and silence. Yet at no time shalt thou be an inactive or unheeding observer. Let the privilege of serving^u be unto thee a sufficient^u satisfaction. Always consent to do acts of kindness and^o usefulness which go unrequited. Set a modest estimate upon the value of

thy labours ; indeed it would have gone hard with thee, if thou hadst not undertaken them ; but even the humblest estimate will leave ground where true peace and success will come to meet thee. Yet do not despair if thou art disappointed even there. Learn to make some sacrifice which goes unrecognised. Suffer some humiliations which do not exalt thee in the sight of men but make thee feel low in thine own. Thou shalt not too often resent the contradictions of men or of events, but must try to keep quiet and let things be. There are usurpations thou shalt not resist ; thy rights must go unrespected now and again. There must be charges made which thou canst not and hadst better not try to meet. There are persecutions which will end in exhausting, if not in killing, thee. It is foolish to try to explain or to appeal for mercy when mercy is not felt for thee. The history of the moral and spiritual world is most bewildering in its records sometimes. There is indeed a rough justice in the world which stalks with terrible retribution in its hands ; and often and often have I seen evil-doers suddenly struck down in the midst of their

boast and success. I have seen the humble raised sometimes and the pure-minded recognised and honoured at last. But still it is not an uncommon thing to meet the unrelieved distress of the righteous man and see the servant of GOD go down in the midst of his afflictions. The light of a better life dawns where the darkness of this ends, not before ; but present discords suggest a great peace somewhere. There is a rest for the troubled, but not always in this life. He or she who has borne much in patience for the sake of conscience, has the divinest compassion of GOD and the sons of GOD ; and the recompense is at hand, though not exactly here. Stand fast faithfully, therefore, to the vow of thy service, for the ways of godly life go farther than death, far into the eternal kingdom where the great majority have gone. Speak thy divinest message, though it fails to call forth a present response. Live thy divinest life, though men may not care to make thy acquaintance. Engage thyself in some arduous labour, the true result of which is neither here nor now. Thus live in the future and know future life. There is the pro-

foundest interest in the knowledge that is to come afterwards; but in the meanwhile thou shalt walk in ignorance through the valley of shadows. There is very eager anticipation of the coming joy dimly seen afar; but in the meanwhile thou hast to groan and sigh and sweat as if thy heart is about to dissolve in thee. O my son, thou camest from elsewhere and thou art bound for elsewhere. Do not grieve too much and too long and, whilst thou art here, do not disdain the innocent happiness of life of which thou shalt have thy share. The zest for life's joy is a holy impulse. Perfect thy whole nature and consecrate thy whole soul before GOD and man. But always know that the conditions of GOD'S service and true peace lie in much unrequited labour, much patient suffering, in secret hope and trust whose fulfilment is not here.

Bearing Burdens.

BEAR thy^e burdens, O my son, be they light or heavy, bear them in the heat and weariness of the day, looking up to thy GOD only for help and courage, for none but He knoweth the afflictions of His servant. These thou mayst not avoid if thou hast a regard for what is true life to thy soul. This is not a garden of roses to which thou art sent, but it is a land of promise; and it can yield its fullness only to those who have toiled fully and faithfully. Learn to forsake many desires even if these be innocent in themselves; for the satisfaction of all desire lieth in the favor of others, and they have desires of their own which may not accord with thine. Learn to put up with petty inconveniences which must come. Petty difficulties make a large part of life; thou must learn to overcome them with forbearance, patience and kindness of spirit. Petty hardships are more trying than serious ones. Thou hast to be calm and sweet-

tempered amidst everything that befalls thee. It is unhappily true that he who worketh in GOD's vineyard needeth many goads to prick him in the path. Learn carefully to do thy little duties to render small services to every man, woman and child that comes in thy way. For these small things make the great sum of every spiritual life. My son, in proposing a grand ideal to thyself, thou hast failed in little things and, therefore, failure hath overtaken thee in great things as well as in little, and thus the main object of thy life, namely the service of GOD and man, remaineth unaccomplished even down to the present day. It is not the man of great learning nor of high place nor of many resources that always serveth well; but he who beareth before him the true sense of his calling, who amidst all distractions never forgetteth what he came here for, who consenteth to every sorrow and humiliation, who refuseth no hard work or lowly duty, whose love of GOD hath seasoned itself to suffering and forgiveness of every kind, it is only such a man that fulfils his high destiny. For afflictions, like shadows on the mountains, pass away

soon like the sunlight of joy and prosperity, but the great heavens are always there, and the revolving orbs and the flaming horizons and the commandments and realities of GOD. Thou mayst see them or not see them in thy dust-clouded-vision, but so live that they may always press upon thy spirit. The force of habits, bad or good, the dullness of self-complaisance, the weight of daily work, perhaps the praise of men, have bound thee to the obligations of the moment, and thou hast forgotten the mysterious problem of thy being. But I warn thee, awake to the sense of thy responsibility while there is yet time, and amidst all thy many troubles follow thy proper calling unto the approval of the Great Spirit in thee. The mariner never refuses to go out to sea when the call for duty comes, the soldier does not stay at home when the command has gone forth; there is hard toil, perhaps death, in store for them. And thou, my son, why dost thou take so much thought of thy safety when thy vow of service demands thee to deny thyself? It is not the vague of the void, into which I ask thee to thrust thyself. Thou hast some sure experience of bear-

ing the burden of the Great Master's work. If thou hast made the sacrifice, hast thou not reaped the reward? If thou hast run risks and laboured hard, have not the guardianship of GOD and the love and honor of men fallen richly to thy share? GOD hath been to thee like a human friend, nay more than any earthly friend. It is not merely that the hope and promise of heaven have been amply accorded to thee, but the joys and blessings of this world have been thine much more than most other men have known. And all this because thou hast been faithful to thy GOD. Faithful? In a hundred things that thou shouldst have done thou hast not kept thy faith. Many an impulse of passion and pride has arisen which thou hast not checked; many a forbidden desire thou hast sought to gratify, many a mean enmity hast thou nursed in thy perverse heart. If every command of GOD that came unsolicited to thy conscience had been followed at the risk of trouble and calamity, if every spiritual impulse in thee had found its performance, life had been a different thing to thee from now. No, thou hast not always kept thy faith with thy Master.

He hath trusted thee, trust thou Him. He hath committed His sacred cause into thy keeping. He hath renewed His promises and helps to thee from day to day. He hath exalted thee before men and made thee His chosen representative and message-bearer. Whom hath He dealt with more graciously than He hath dealt with thee? Why hast thou not dealt with Him in the same spirit? Why hast thou not trusted Him in thy troubles and uncertainties? Why hast thou not trusted Him with thy life and thy life-work? He hath given thee opportunities; why hast thou not availed thyself of them with the zeal and whole-heartedness due from thee? He hath loved thee, blessed thee, preferred thee before other men. Love thy GOD, serve Him and prefer His purpose before thy own purposes and the purpose of every other man. He is ever near unto thy heart; strive night and day not to stray from His Spirit. He seeketh thee ever, seek Him in all things; and if thou findest Him, be exceedingly careful that thou lovest Him not again. Thou hast yet a great work before thee. Choose not thy place or thy time or the men for whom thou art to

spend thyself. Let the Almighty Disposer of life and death choose for thee the scene and the season of thy service and all things about thee. In the least trifles concerning thy present or future, concerning thy peace and spiritual progress, depend daily upon the Spirit of GOD who is in and around thee. Thus will thy yoke be made easy, thy burdens be made bearable, and thy life in small things and in great be made worthy and acceptable before thy GOD.

